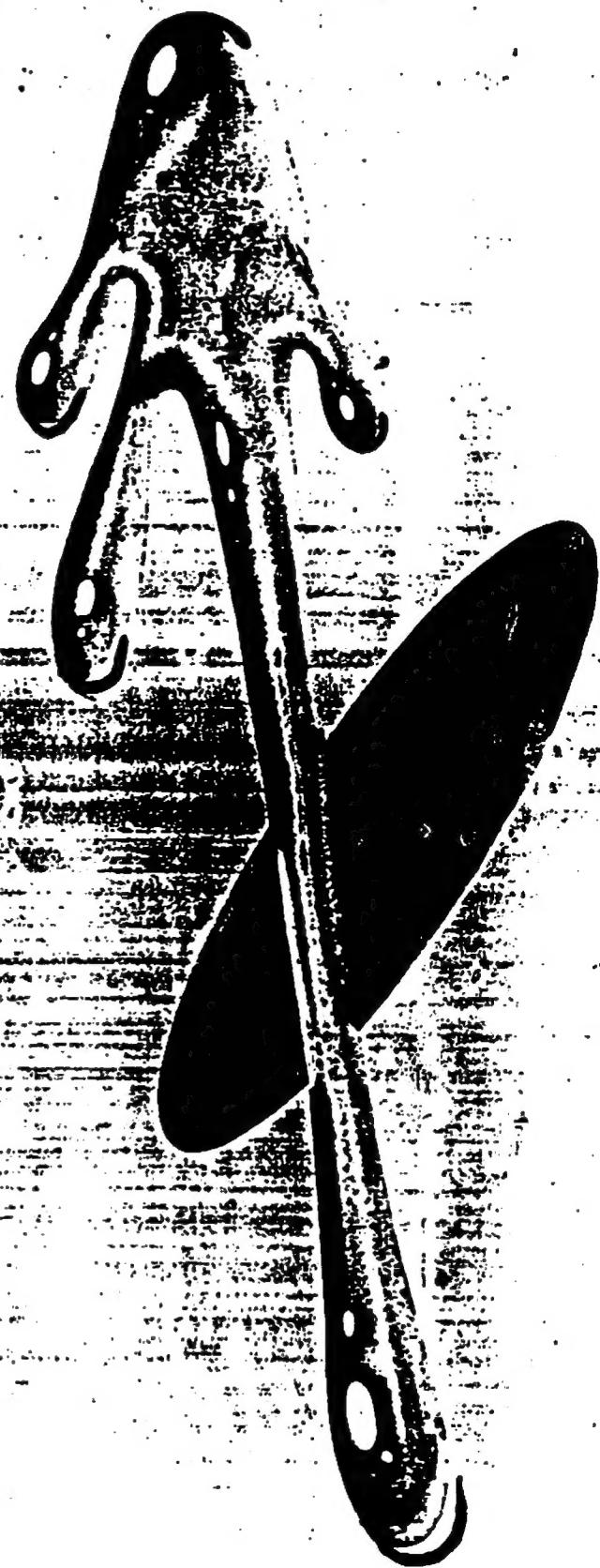


AWAUCHMEN



WATCHMEN

Screenplay by
Sam Hamm

Rewrite by
Gary Goldman

from the graphic novel by
Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons

LARGO ENTERTAINMENT
August 12, 1992

INT. HIGH RISE APARTMENT - NIGHT

A television set plays the 11 o'clock news. TITLES ROLL.

NEWSCASTER

...troops have been massing along
the border for several weeks.
Reports are now coming in that
India and China have both gone
on full nuclear alert.

CAMERA PULLS BACK from TV screen. A man's hairy legs walk back and forth. He wears a short terrycloth robe and looks like Clark Gable would have at 65. Handsome, dominant, muscles like a weightlifter, this old guy could still kick your ass with one hand tied behind his back. The only incongruous detail is a yellow HAPPY FACE BUTTON on the lapel of his robe. His name is EDWARD BLAKE.

NEWSCASTER

Pakistan has vowed to retaliate
if China is attacked, and the
Russian Republic has threatened
to use its nuclear arsenal in
defense of India.

Blake pops a CASSETTE into his VCR, and PORNO replaces the news. He sets a bottle of Bushmill's Irish Whiskey on a side table but keeps walking around his SWANKY BACHELOR PAD, sipping from a glass. On the walls, paintings of naked women with big knockers. Through the picture window, the glittering MANHATTAN SKYLINE. An advertising blimp floats by in the distance. Blake turns down the lights. Settles into his Lazyboy recliner. Fast-forwards to a good part. Sits back to enjoy.

INT. CORRIDOR / BLAKE'S FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

A BOOTED FOOT kicks the front door open. Blake leaps out of his chair, ready to fight, then pauses when he recognizes the INTRUDER'S face -- which we never see.

The Intruder advances on him. Blake crouches into a fighting stance. His eyes take on the birdlike hardness of a professional killer.

From behind the CAMERA, a fist shoots out and smashes into Blake's jaw. Blake throws a punch. The Intruder blocks it and lands a smashing combination. Blake strikes out for the throat, but the Intruder easily grabs his arm and breaks it.

Blake knows he's done for.

The Intruder calmly pursues him, kicking in his teeth, mercilessly reducing him to a bloody pulp.

Blake staggers weakly. The Intruder scoops him over his shoulder and carries him toward the picture window. Blake hasn't got the strength to resist.

BLAKE

No... Nooo!

The Intruder hurls Blake through the wall of glass.

EXT. HIGH RISE - NIGHT

Down, down, down he falls, flailing helplessly IN SLOW MOTION. His face in close-up, experiencing every last microsecond. Jagged shards of glass tumble alongside him. Windows glide by with people inside, living their lives. The sidewalk grows wider. Blake closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

YELLOW -- A WHOLE SCREEN OF YELLOW

Dark, anxious MUSIC. CAMERA SLOWLY PULLS BACK. Black and red push in from the sides of the frame to form an abstract pattern...BACK, BACK, BACK to reveal that we are looking at Blake's HAPPY FACE BUTTON, stained with a fleck of dried blood...It's lodged in a gutter grating...next to a curb...where Blake's body lies...CORONER'S ASSISTANTS lift it up...and place it in an ambulance...which is parked on....

EXT. PARK AVENUE - NIGHT

And now a STREET CRAZY with red hair walks by, carrying a placard that reads, "THE END IS NIGH." He treads straight through the puddle of blood, leaving a trail of crimson footprints...A COP IN ARMORED RIOT GEAR bashes him in the back with a rifle...and the Street Crazy continues through the crowd of ONLOOKERS...who are kept in line by LOTS OF COPS...all with helmets and visors and shields.

Manhattan feels different, like a police state.

DET. LT. BURNS approaches his colleague, DET. HYDE, homicide police in plain clothes.

BURNS

Had a lot of blood in him.

HYDE

You oughta see upstairs. It's a slaughterhouse.

BURNS

Any leads?

HYDE

Doesn't matter. We're off the case.

Burns looks at him, puzzled.

HYDE

Seems our friend here was hard core CTU. Bullard's up there right now.

BURNS

Bullard himself?

INT. BLAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CLOSE ON ERNEST BULLARD. Square jaw, square face, squarely built. A man no one likes. He looks around, intense, unsmiling, immobile, as his team of FEDERAL AGENTS analyze the scene of the crime with chilling efficiency.

He turns to ADAMSON, a chiseled Fed with dark glasses.

BULLARD

Don't leave anything behind.

TITLES END:

EXT. PARK AVENUE - LATER THAT NIGHT

The moon is full. A blimp floats by. Pan down to the deserted street, to the empty sidewalk. A man's shadow enters frame and slides toward the gutter. He wears a trenchcoat and a slouch hat. His face is shrouded in darkness. He crouches and picks up the Happy Face Button. Looks at it.

He pulls a COMPLEX GUN from his trenchcoat. He aims it at Blake's window and fires. A GRAPPLING HOOK shoots up the side of the building.

CLOSE ON HOOK as it lodges on the broken frame of Blake's window, a long rope trailing to the ground.

The man in the trenchcoat grabs the rope and walks up the side of the building like a fly.

INT. BLAKE'S HIGH-RISE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

A long corridor cordoned off with thin plastic strips reading "CIVIL TERRORISM UNIT -- DO NOT CROSS." TWO CTU AGENTS play gin rummy. At the far end is a single door, sealed off.

INT. BLAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The man in the trenchcoat climbs in through the vacant window frame. He shines a FLASHLIGHT around the room.

It's empty. No furniture. No curtains. Even the carpeting has been rolled up and carted away.

He spins abruptly, and his beam strikes the splintered remains of a built-in WALL MIRROR -- and there, in the cracked and spiky glass, we get our first look at his face. Or what passes for his face.

He has no eyes, no nose, no mouth -- nothing but a symmetrical inkblot pattern on a white elastic hood. And the inkblot constantly changes shape, like an amoeba.

Meet RORSCHACH.

He turns from his image and scans with his flashlight. His interest is caught by a CLOSET. He measures its depth with his arm.

He steps inside. Measures the depth again. It's shorter.

With gloved hands, he feels his way along the seams of the closet until he discovers a CONCEALED TRIGGER. He presses it and a panel slides back, revealing a SECOND SECRET CLOSET.

Inside he finds a bizarre UNIFORM -- a frightening leather mask, gloves, bodysuit, shoulder armor with a stars and stripes motif, rows of exotic weaponry. Rorschach examines the closet more carefully and unearths a dusty framed PHOTOGRAPH.

It's a group shot, five men, one woman, all dressed in similar costumes. The kind of costumes superheroes might wear if they really existed. These are THE WATCHMEN.

Rorschach clears his throat -- a kind of tic -- then dusts off the photograph.

CLOSE ON PHOTOGRAPH

In the center is the dead man, Blake, wearing the costume in the closet. The costume of THE COMEDIAN. Next to him stands a man in an OWL-THEMED OUTFIT.

HOLLIS MASON (O.S.)
So there I was at Balducci's
buyin' dogfood for ol' Phantom
here...

Pull back and reveal...

INT. HOLLIS MASON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

...the photo is mounted on a wall next to a framed front page of the NEW YORK HERALD with the headline: NIGHT OWL RETIRES/ NEW NIGHT OWL TO TAKE HIS PLACE. A newphoto shows the original Night Owl, in a 1940's vintage superhero costume, shaking hands with the new Night Owl, already seen in the previous photo. Other memorabilia and owl-themed bric-a-brac are on display.

HOLLIS MASON

I turn the corner by the dairy
case and WHAM! Who do I bump into
but the Screaming Skull! You
remember him, don't ya, Danny?

We find ourselves in the dingy apartment of a trim, well-built older man, HOLLIS MASON, still vivacious at 77. His friend is DAN DREIBERG, 44, thickset, bespectacled, an athlete gone to seed. He seems meek, defeated, old before his time.

DREIBERG

I think I heard you mention him.

HOLLIS

I must've put him away a dozen
times in the Forties. Then he
reformed and turned to Jesus. Now
he tells me his oldest grandson
just got into Princeton. Ain't
that where you went to college?

Dreiberg is not very enthusiastic about the coincidence.

DREIBERG

It's getting late, Hollis. I
oughta go.

HOLLIS

Oh sure, Danny, lost track o' the
time there. You musta been bored
as hell.

DREIBERG

Are you kidding? These bull
sessions are what keep me going.

HOLLIS

Yeah, well us old retired guys
gotta stick together.

Hollis stands up, dislodging PHANTOM, his geriatric Great Dane, from his favorite spot by the fire. Dreiberg puts on his rumpled raincoat.

HOLLIS

It's a cryin' shame they put you
youngsters out to grass. You were
a better Night Owl than I ever
was.

DREIBERG

Hollis, we both know that's a load
of shit, but thanks anyway.

HOLLIS
Hey, watch with the language.
(shakes a fist)
This is the left hook that floored
Captain Axis.

DREIBERG
August 5th, 1944. I'll never
forget.

Dreiberger and Hollis look at each other fondly, hero to hero, like father and son. Hollis slaps Dreiberger on the shoulder.

HOLLIS
Be careful, Danny. The
neighborhood ain't what it used
to be.

Hollis opens the door.

DREIBERG
Thanks for dinner, Hollis. See
you next week.

Dreiberger walks out into the drizzle. Hollis watches his friend trudge wearily away.

HOLLIS
God bless.

EXT. SIDESTREET - NIGHT

Dreiberger walks along a wall covered with GRAFFITI. The largest slogan asks, WHO WATCHES THE WATCHMEN? Across the street, there's A GANG with tinted hair tied up in TOPKNOTS. Dreiberger sees them and hesitates. Now they see him. He walks forward, eyes straight ahead. Too late. They're coming after him. He's afraid.

A column of light stabs down from the sky -- a CTU HELICOPTER.

LOUDSPEAKER
HALT! DO NOT TRY TO RESIST.

The Topknots run for it, pursued by the light.

Dreiberger continues across the street to a DESERTED MANSION. He approaches the SERVANTS' QUARTERS.

When he gets to the FRONT DOOR, he sees that it is ajar, the lock smashed.

He wavers before making up his mind to enter.

INT. DREIBERG'S HOUSE / FOYER - NIGHT

The hallway is dark, but light streams around the edges of a door at the far end. Dreiberг steps stealthily forward, fists clenched. He stops at the door. Hears someone EATING NOISILY. Peers through the crack.

Rorschach sits at the kitchen table, back to the door. Without turning around, he speaks.

RORSCHACH (O.S.)

Hello, Daniel.

DREIBERG

(incredulous)

Rorschach...?

INT. DREIBERG'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Rorschach eats baked beans directly from the can. His voice is a soft, rasping, utterly emotionless whisper.

RORSCHACH

Got hungry waiting. Hope you don't mind.

Dreiberг steps inside, relieved yet unsettled.

DREIBERG

Uh, no, of course not....You want me to heat those up for you?

RORSCHACH

No need. Fine like this.

Rorschach calmly finishes the beans, his elastic mask hiked up over his nose. Throughout the scene, he avoids facing Dreiberг.

DREIBERG

So, uh, how've you been keeping?

RORSCHACH

Out of prison. So far.

Rorschach tosses the happy face button to Dreiberг, who absently scrapes at the red stain with his fingernail.

RORSCHACH

Look familiar?

DREIBERG

I guess. You got some kind of bean juice on it.

RORSCHACH

Human bean juice.

Rorschach wipes his mouth with the back of his glove and pulls his mask down over his chin.

RORSCHACH
The Comedian is dead.

Dreiberg stares down at the button. He seems deeply affected, but not exactly sad.

RORSCHACH
Name was Edward Blake. Had a nice place uptown. -- Someone threw him out the window.

DREIBERG
(jittery)
Uh, listen, maybe we could take about this down in my workshop? I feel kinda exposed up here, and...

Dreiberg flicks a concealed switch behind the refrigerator. CHUNK - Heavy bolts slide aside. The refrigerator pivots on rollers, revealing a secret doorway.

DREIBERG
...this way the cops won't see you when you leave.

INT. DREIBERG'S WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Dreiberg leads Rorschach down some stairs.

DREIBERG
You haven't been down here for a while, have you?

Rorschach runs a gloved finger along a dusty railing.

RORSCHACH
Neither have you.

DREIBERG
Yeah, well, not much reason to any more.

Dreiberg flips some switches. Dim bulbs come on, exposing a huge basement, almost a cave. DREAMY MUSIC starts as Dreiber and Rorschach proceed into a magical, forgotten place.

At the bottom of the stairs, set out for quick-change, is NIGHT OWL'S COSTUME. Other NIGHT OWL gear lies around, abandoned. In the center of the floor, covered with a tattered tarp, is the OWLSHIP.

DREIBERG

Listen, about the Comedian. Are you sure he was pushed? Maybe he, ya know...couldn't go on.

Rorschach snorts with contempt and stares at him with his eyeless face.

RORSCHACH

You must be thinking of someone else.

DREIBERG

(backing down)

Yeah, well, all those years with CTU, he probably had a lot of people gunning for him.

RORSCHACH

Or maybe somebody's picking off Watchmen.

Dreiberg can't suppress a grin.

DREIBERG

Don't you think that's a little...paranoid?

RORSCHACH

That what they're saying about me now? I'm paranoid?

DREIBERG

Nobody's saying anything. Nobody even remembers us.

RORSCHACH

Our enemies do.

Rorschach pulls out a stack of yellowed NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS about the Watchmen's many villains. He flips through them.

RORSCHACH

Golden Boy has Alzheimer's. The Brain Trust died in prison. Moloch, Screaming Skull, Jack of Hearts, all on the street. King of Skin, Mothman, any idea where they are?

Dreiberg shakes his head blankly. Rorschach sees that he is not being taken seriously.

RORSCHACH

Thought I'd let you know, in case somebody's hunting down masks. -- Better go now. Leads to follow.

Rorschach puts away his clippings and sets off towards the abandoned subway tunnel that leads from the rear of the cavernous basement.

DREIBERG
You remember the way?

RORSCHACH
Of course. Partners for twelve years.

Dreiberger watches the lonely figure enter the tunnel and is struck by a pang of regret.

DREIBERG
Those were great times, Rorschach.
Whatever happened to them?

Rorschach disappears into the darkness.

RORSCHACH
You quit.

Alone, Dreiberger sits down on a crate and stares at the happy face button in his hand. Behind him towers the heroic Night Owl costume that he used to fill.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANHATTAN SKYLINE - NIGHT

The magnificent crowns of the Chrysler Building, the Empire State Building, lit up at night. And looming above both, obelisk-shaped VEIDT TOWER.

EXT. VEIDT TOWER - NIGHT

We're gliding up the side, past the GIANT BILLBOARD for NOSTALGIA perfume; past the name VEIDT sculpted in letters sixty feet high; all the way to the capstone -- a giant pyramid of glass. We peer down inside at...

INT. VEIDT'S GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

An elaborate system of scaffolds, ropes, and trapezes fills the tall space. The greatest gymnast the world has ever known swings, flips, soars, and twists through this "jungle gym" like an urban Tarzan. He moves with continuous supple grace, as if freed from gravity. (This should be a memorable sequence, comparable to Fred Astaire dancing on the walls and ceiling. See me for details.)

Our Tarzan is ADRIAN VEIDT. He is blond and magnificent in every way, like the hero of an epic. At 45, he looks ten years younger.

INTERCOM
Mr. Veidt, there's a Mr. Dreiberger
here to see you.

Veidt finishes an amazing maneuver and hangs by one hand.

VEIDT
Send him in.

A door opens far below, and Dreiberger enters the cavernous gym. He looks up in time to see Veidt launch himself from a trapeze forty feet high.

Veidt tumbles, rolls, and twists as if diving from the high board -- then lands like a cat just in front of Dreiberger. He's barely winded.

VEIDT
Daniel, is something wrong?

Lining the walls are gigantic posters featuring Adrian Veidt as OZYMANDIAS, his costumed hero persona, dressed in royal purple and gold. OZYMANDIAS performing for INDIA FAMINE RELIEF. OZYMANDIAS touting THE VEIDT METHOD of bodybuilding and personal transformation. OZYMANDIAS ACTION FIGURES for kids.

DREIBERG
I'm sorry to bother you, Adrian,
but I just had a visit from
Rorschach. -- The Comedian's been
murdered. That's all I know.

Veidt wipes his face with a towel.

VEIDT
My God...murdered? What's Rorschach
got to do with it?

DREIBERG
He thinks someone's...I don't
know, stalking us.

VEIDT
Us. You mean the Watchmen?

Veidt laughs as he pours juice into a crystal goblet.

VEIDT
Daniel, Rorschach's insane.

DREIBERG
I know, I know. It's just...
Shouldn't Laurie be told; I mean
just in case? -- I'd call her
myself, but...

VEIDT
No, they'd trace you. -- I'll let
her know.

DREIBERG
(relieved)
I appreciate it.

A comradely smile. And Veidt walks Dreiberger to the door..

VEIDT
So, how's everything else?

DREIBERG
Ohhh, about the same.

VEIDT
When are you coming to work for
me?

DREIBERG
What do you need me for, Adrian?
You're the world's smartest man.

VEIDT
Daniel, you have a gift for
engineering, and I plan to exploit
you for my profit. -- Now what
are you interested in: rocketry,
new materials, genetic
engineering?

Veidt pets his genetically engineered pet, BUBASTIS, a
jungle cat like no other on Earth.

VEIDT
Let me put you to work.

DREIBERG
I'll think about it. Thanks.

Veidt sees the defeat and depression in Dreiberger's face.
No more needs to be said. They shake hands.

DREIBERG
And you won't forget about...?

VEIDT
I won't forget.

Veidt watches sadly as Dreiberger leaves. The door closes.
He turns around.

Rorschach is standing in front of him.

RORSCHACH
You've heard the news.

Although startled, Veidt refuses to give Rorschach the pleasure of seeming surprised. He sips his juice.

VEIDT

Frankly, I'm surprised The Comedian lasted as long as he did. The man was practically a Nazi.

RORSCHACH

He stood up for his country, Veidt. Never cashed in on his reputation. Never sold books or posters or toy soldiers based on himself. Never became a prostitute.

VEIDT

Just a murderer, doing Uncle Sam's dirty work.

Rorschach sits on Veidt's desk.

RORSCHACH

You don't sound sorry he's dead.

VEIDT

Did you come here to warn me or accuse me?

RORSCHACH

Can't decide.

Rorschach picks up an Ozymandias doll and contorts it.

VEIDT

Actually, Rorschach, I owe The Comedian a lot. He made me see that spending my life "avenging wrongs" was a waste of time.

RORSCHACH

Compared to making money?

Rorschach abruptly tosses the doll to Veidt, who catches it with ease.

VEIDT

Compared to solving the world's real problems.

Rorschach walks to a broken window where his grappling hook is secured.

RORSCHACH

Good luck with world peace. Hope you don't get murdered first.

VEIDT
You too. Have a nice day.

Rorschach disappears out the window.

Veidt, troubled, looks out at the Manhattan skyline. In the foreground, on his desk, lies a newspaper: INDIA, CHINA ON BRINK OF WAR.

CUT TO:

EXT. MILITARY INSTALLATION - DAY

Barbed wire, ARMED GUARDS everywhere. A LIMOUSINE waits at the checkpoint; the guards wave it through, and a huge cast-iron gate rolls into place behind it. On the gate is a small, tasteful sign which reads: ROCKEFELLER MILITARY RESEARCH CENTER.

INT. ROCKEFELLER MILITARY RESEARCH CENTER - DAY

Adrian Veidt and Ernest Bullard walk down a long, greenish corridor flanked by ARMED ESCORT TROOPS. These are two powerful men who dislike each other intensely.

BULLARD
I'll keep this simple, Veidt.
I don't want the Big Man upset.
We might need him to intervene .
in Asia.

VEIDT
Don't worry, Bullard; I'm here
to see Laurie.

They arrive at a foot-thick metal door labelled "SPECIAL TALENT QUARTERS." One of the TROOPS punches in a six-digit access code.

BULLARD
Well, don't rock the boat. He's
not as "stable" as he used to be.

The door opens and standing there is a statuesque, raven-haired beauty in her mid-thirties: LAURIE JUSPECZYK -- aka the SILK SPECTRE. She's in great shape.

LAURIE
Adrian, hi, come on in.

Laurie shoots a chilly glance at Bullard as she leads Veidt inside. Hold on Bullard as the door closes. His expression grows dark.

INT. SPECIAL TALENT QUARTERS - DAY

Laurie and Veidt hug warmly.

VEIDT
Laurie, you look sensational.

LAURIE
I use your moisturizing cream.
It really works. -- Let me take
your coat.

Laurie escorts Veidt into a huge laboratory space: great oversized machines blinking computer terminals, advanced scientific paraphernalia of every description.

VEIDT
So how's life with the walking
H-bomb?

LAURIE
Go say hello. He's over by the
particle accelerator.

She points the way, then vanishes into the living quarters with Veidt's coat. He wanders through the lab with an envious eye. Suddenly a smile crosses his face as he gazes up at the ceiling.

VEIDT
Jon.

DR. MANHATTAN (O.S.)
(deep, booming voice)
Hello, Adrian.

Forty feet tall, bright blue, and buck naked, DR. MANHATTAN (born JON OSTERMAN) calmly adjusts a calibration atop his favorite toy.

DR. MANHATTAN
I think I'm about to detect a
gluino.

VEIDT
Congratulations. I understand
Schwartzmann caught a decaying
proton over at CERN.

Laurie rejoins them.

LAURIE
(to Dr. Manhattan)
Jon, why don't you shrivel on down
and join us. After all, the great
Ozymandias has descended from on
high.

Dr. Manhattan shrinks to a somewhat more manageable six-foot-five. A pair of black trunks materializes about his waist -- preserving his modesty.

VEIDT
Do I detect a note of sarcasm?

LAURIE
Well, I'm sure this isn't a social call.

He takes a breath.

VEIDT
I'm afraid we've lost a colleague.
The Comedian was murdered.

DR. MANHATTAN
I heard this morning. Bullard asked me to attend the funeral as a matter of protocol.

LAURIE
(irritated)
Why didn't you tell me?

DR. MANHATTAN
It slipped my mind.

She shakes her head, exasperated.

LAURIE
Well, I can't say I'm torn up about it. The guy was a real shit to my mother.

VEIDT
Also, Rorschach's on the case.
He thinks it's revenge against the Watchmen.

DR. MANHATTAN
Bullard suspects the Iraqis.

VEIDT
What's your theory?

DR. MANHATTAN
Life and death are unquantifiable abstracts. They don't concern me.

Veidt and Laurie glance at each other, disturbed by Jon's attitude.

LAURIE
I could use a drink. How about you, Adrian?

Veidt nods. Dr. Manhattan, meanwhile, has drifted off to another part of the lab. He stands before a vast bank of machinery -- and as we watch, a panel detaches itself from the front of the console and floats off to one side.

A module of circuit boards, chips, and pin connectors slides out of the hole. Individual components detach themselves and hang in midair. Dr. Manhattan hasn't lifted a finger; he's dismantling and reassembling his equipment through sheer force of mind.

Veidt ambles over to him.

VEIDT

So, Jon, looks like you'll be dismantling missiles before too long.

DR. MANHATTAN

(distracted)

Bullard mentioned something about India and China.

VEIDT

They're about to go nuclear. This could be it.

Dr. Manhattan makes the module, now fully reconstructed, slide back into place.

DR. MANHATTAN

Politics doesn't interest me any more.

He drifts away to another part of the lab, ignoring Veidt.

VEIDT

Well, Jon, it was good to see you.

Veidt heads inside and encounters Laurie with two stiff drinks in hand. She hands him one.

VEIDT

He's a little farther gone each time.

LAURIE

You don't know what it's like living with him. He doesn't think like we do. He doesn't feel any more.

VEIDT

Sweetheart, cut him some slack. He's single-handedly keeping the world from destroying itself.

LAURIE

(embarrassed)

I know; I shouldn't complain. I'm serving my purpose, right?

He puts a sympathetic arm around her shoulder.

LAURIE

It's just every once in a while,
I need to talk to somebody human

She looks up at him, lonely, needy, beautiful.

VEIDT

Sweetheart, you need to get out
of the house.

LAURIE

Adrian, I'd love to.

He sets down his drink.

VEIDT

Unfortunately, I'm swamped right
now, with the peace drive and
everything.

(takes his coat)

But why don't you give Dan
Dreiberg a call. I'm sure he'd
be glad to hear from you.

LAURIE

(disappointed)

Good idea. -- I'll ring for the
guards.

She presses the buzzer.

VEIDT

And I wouldn't worry about
Rorschach's conspiracy theory.
I'm sure it's nothing.

The door slides open, and TROOPS appear to escort Veidt
back down the hallway. He hugs Laurie and steps outside.
The doors close.

Laurie takes a long pull on her drink as she prepares to
join her superhuman lover.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON: A DIARY

A gloved hand scribbles a psychotic scrawl.

RORSCHACH (V.O.)

Slept all day. Awoken at 4:37.
Landlady demanding rent.

EXT. TENEMENT ROOFTOP - DUSK

Rorschach writes in his journal while sitting on a brick
chimney. He is silhouetted against the darkening copper
sky like a gargoyle.

RORSCHACH (V.O.)
I am sure she cheats on welfare.
Must remember to investigate.

He stuffs his journal in his overcoat and climbs down a rickety metal fire escape.

EXT. STREETS AND BACK ALLEYS - NIGHT

We begin a MONTAGE to the rhythm of Rorschach's rantings. He wanders through the garbage-laden by-ways of the worst neighborhoods -- the sordid underbelly of the city. Illicit business is conducted in doorways. People scream and weep in their hovels.

RORSCHACH (V.O.)
On Friday night, a comedian died
in New York. No one cares but
me.

He looks up at a lighted window. Inside, a naked woman draws the curtains. A male silhouette embraces her. Rorschach watches as they make love.

RORSCHACH (V.O.)
Are they right? Is it futile?

He kicks windblown newspaper off his shoe. The headline reads, "INDIA, CHINA ON BRINK OF WAR."

RORSCHACH (V.O.)
Soon there will be war. Millions
will burn. Why does one death
matter against so many?

A prostitute hustles Rorschach as he passes by. Then she sees his face.

RORSCHACH (V.O.)
Because there is good and there
is evil. And evil must be
punished, even in the face of
Armageddon.

Rorschach arrives at HAPPY HARRY'S BAR, a decrepit waterfront dive.

INT. HAPPY HARRY'S BAR - NIGHT

Assorted UNDERWORLD CHARACTERS consort with each other, watching a TOPLESS DANCER bump and grind.

The door opens, and Rorschach walks in. Those who notice him go pale. He approaches the bar. HAPPY HARRY, polishing glasses, breaks into a cold sweat.

HARRY
Ruh, Ror, Rorschach. How ya
doin'?

RORSCHACH
Fine, Harry. Yourself?

Rorschach picks up a metal bar stool.

HARRY
Oh god, please don't kill anybody.

Rorschach heaves the stool into the glasses and liquor bottles stacked behind Harry. CRASH! The whole bar goes silent. Rorschach addresses the crowd without raising his voice.

RORSCHACH
Guy went sidewalk diving on Park Avenue. Name was Edward Blake. Friend of mine.

A strapping young farm boy, HARLEY, sits at a table with an older man, JACK, a natty dresser with a toupee.

HARLEY
You hear that, Jack? He's got friends?

JACK
Shut up, Harley.

Rorschach wanders around the room. ENORMOUS TOUGHS stare up in terror as he strolls past.

RORSCHACH
You, Gideon. Arsonist. How's business?
(moving on)
Johnny Gobs. What's new at the schoolyard?

HARLEY
(holds his nose)
Oh God, do you smell him?

Harley's comment catches Rorschach's attention. Jack pushes back his chair to stand up.

JACK
...I gotta take a leak.

Rorschach pushes Jack down in his seat.

RORSCHACH
Jack of Hearts...who's your new boyfriend?

JACK
He's just a kid, Rorschach. Leave him alone.

Rorschach grabs Jack's hand.

RORSCHACH
Who killed Ed Blake?

JACK
Never heard of him.

Rorschach bends Jack's pinky until it SNAPS. Harley starts to his feet.

HARLEY
You fuckin...!

Rorschach smashes his elbow down into Steve's nose. Steve slumps in his chair.

RORSCHACH
(to Jack of Hearts)
Put you away for white slavery.
Remember now?

JACK
(whimpering)
That don't make sense.

Rorschach breaks Jack's index finger and forces him onto the floor.

RORSCHACH
THE COMEDIAN. WHO KILLED HIM?

Jack just MOANS. Rorschach looks around, threatening to break Jack's thumb.

RORSCHACH
Anybody...?

As he scans the terrified faces, the Naked Dancer slides a sawed-off shotgun from behind the piano and aims it at Rorschach's back. Without looking, he spins and hurls a beer bottle that catches her in the eyebrow. The shotgun discharges TWO BLASTS into the faces of some patrons, who wail and curse.

RORSCHACH
Next time, have information.

Rorschach contemptuously tosses somebody's overcoat over the Naked Dancer -- and heads for the door.

RORSCHACH (O.S.)
I'm the only one left intact.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

A puddle in the RAIN. A pair of boots splashes through it.

RORSCHACH (O.S.)
Veidt is a pampered, decadent
liberal. Dreiberg, a failed saint
whimpering in his basement.

Rorschach walks through the downpour in front of grafitti
that reads "WHO WATCHES THE WATCHMEN?"

RORSCHACH (O.S.)
The first Night Owl runs a garage.
The Comedian murdered.

A column of light stabs down from a police helicopter.
Rorschach takes cover in a doorway.

RORSCHACH (O.S.)
Silk Spectre, a kept woman. Her
mother a bloated, aging whore.
Dr. Manhattan, barely human.

The column of light slides all around, looking for the
suspicious figure.

RORSCHACH (O.S.)
They all surrendered. All but
me.

The column of light finds us and SHINES IN LENS.

CUT TO:

INT. NATIONAL PARK OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

FIVE BRILLIANT SCIENTISTS known as THE BRAIN TRUST have
barricaded themselves into a large round room with views
of New York Harbor. They are equipped with futuristic
weapons and various high-tech electronics in Halibuton
cases. Their leader, DR. CORTEX, communicates through a
multi-purpose cyber-helmet. HOSTAGES lie bound and gagged
on the floor.

DR. CORTEX
The Brain Trust has voted, and
we're detonating the bomb in one
minute.

BULLARD (O.S.)
Dr. Cortex, your demands have been
met. The prisoners are being
transferred now.

Dr. Cortex looks at a PORTABLE TV which shows NINE
PRISONERS WITH CASTRO BEARDS victoriously holding up their
fists as they board a waiting government helicopter.

DR. CORTEX
No tricks, Bullard, or we blow
her brains out.

BULLARD (O.S.)
(from walkie-talkie)
Whose brains, Cortex?

CRASH ZOOM OUT from Cortex to reveal that he and the others are inside the OBSERVATION ROOM in the CROWN OF THE STATUE OF LIBERTY.

DR. CORTEK (O.S.)
(a nasty laugh)
Lady Liberty's, Comrade: Lady Liberty's brains!

EXT. FERRYBOAT IN HARBOR - DAY

FEDERAL COMMANDO TEAM on deck of ferry anchored a half-mile off Liberty Island. The civilian CHIEF resembles Ernest Bullard.

SWAT COP
Mr. Bullard...lock...on the Statue.

Bullard hoists a pair of binoculars.

BULLARD
I don't believe it.

POV THROUGH BINOCULARS

The Watchmen drop from the Owlship on wires and land on Lady Liberty's CROWN.

BULLARD (O.S.)
The fucking Watchmen:

EXT. LADY LIBERTY'S CROWN

Ozymandias, Night Owl, Rorschach, Silk Spectre, and the Comedian attach wires to the spokes of the crown. Only Dr. Manhattan is absent.

CAMERA PULLS BACK AND REVEALS THAT THE ADVENTURE WE ARE WATCHING IS ACTUALLY A MOVIE PROJECTED ON A SCREEN.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE.

Dreiberg and Hollis Mason are in the audience. Dreiberg whispers to his friend.

DREIBERG
What were we supposed to do? Let the Brain Trust get away with it?

HOLLIS
Stop beating yourself up. It's been ten years.

A LITTLE BOY sitting in front of them turns around and SHUSHES them angrily. They are attending a Kiddie Matinee.

EXT. LADY LIBERTY'S CROWN

The Watchmen put on special wrist bands and prepare to leap over the side. Silk Spectre whispers to the Comedian.

SILK SPECTRE
Maybe we should stage a diversion.

COMEDIAN
Yeah, barge in topless. While they're staring at your tits, I'll blow their balls off.

As she smirks, not amused, Ozymandias gives a hand signal. One, Two, Three. -- THEY JUMP!

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM

The Watchmen crash through the windows, swinging on wires.

One of the Brain Trust flips the switch of a futuristic weapon. It fills the room with FIBERS OF ELECTRICITY -- but the Watchmen seem unaffected.

DR. CORTEX
(amazed, incensed)
It's not working!

In their various styles, the Watchmen subdue the geniuses in short order. In the struggle, the Comedian's automatic rifle is kicked out of a window.

All is quiet. Ozymandias turns off the futuristic weapon. The Watchmen examine their wrist bands and turn to him.

SILK SPECTRE
Nice work, Ozymandias.

Suddenly Cortex grabs a FEMALE TOUR GUIDE and holds a knife to her throat.

DR. CORTEX
Freeze or she dies!

Cortex edges toward one of the unconscious Brain Trustees who has the DETONATOR taped to his arm.

Night Owl is the only one in position with a weapon. He sights the Cortex with a BOW AND ARROW, but he can't get a clear shot. Cortex jabs his blade into the Tour Guide's skin.

DR. CORTEX
I'll do it, I swear!

THE COMEDIAN
(to Night Owl)
Shoot him, goddammit!

NIGHT OWL
I might hit the woman!

THE COMEDIAN
He'll kill everybody!!

Night Owl can't get a clear shot. He's paralyzed. Dr. Cortex reaches for the Detonator. The Comedian pulls a knife from his boot and throws it. It misses the Tour Guide by a hair and strikes Dr. Cortex in the throat. He grabs the Detonator and manages to activate it as he collapses.

The Detonator starts counting down from "30." The Watchmen look at each other with a hollow feeling. Silk Spectre examines the limb.

OZYMANDIAS
Can you defuse it?

SILK SPECTRE
Not a chance.

OZYMANDIAS
Try! Owl, get the ship down here.
Rorschach, Comedian, restrain the
Brain Trust. They've got to stand
trial. I'll free the hostages.

The Owl activates a remote control, and the Owlship descends into view just outside the windows of the Observation Room. Ozymandias helps the hostages through the window. Rorschach and The Comedian carry the Brain Trustees on board. Six seconds left. Silk Spectre is still trying to save the Statue.

INT. OWLSHIP - DAY

The Watchmen struggle to get on board before the bomb detonates. Night Owl takes the controls.

THE COMEDIAN
Go, go, now! If she wants to die,
let her!

Night Owl waits an extra second. Silk Spectre rushes to climb on board. Rorschach stretches out of the side hatch and gives her a helping hand just as the Owlship pulls away.

The Statue of Liberty grows distant through the windshield.

EXT. STATUE OF LIBERTY - DAY

KABOOM! Lady Liberty is blown to pieces.

INT. OWLSHIP

CLOSE ON the Watchmen as they observe the disaster.

A BLOW AUREOLE OF LIGHT glows behind them, and Dr. Manhattan materializes. He watches, appalled, as the debris rains down.

LAURIE

Where the hell were you?

DR. MANHATTAN

(sheepish)

Solving an equation.

EXT. PERRY

Bullard watches as the upper half of Lady Liberty topples over. He seems almost pleased.

BULLARD

That's it. They're finished. --
Get me Senator Keene.

INT. TV STUDIO - NIGHT

The Channel 4 Newsroom, with anchors SHEILA SHEA and JIM BRADLEY.

SHEILA

In the face of mounting public pressure, the City of New York has revoked its contract with Adrian Veidt's super-team. FBI Chief, Ernest Bullard, has threatened a nation-wide shutdown if criminal charges against the Watchmen are dropped.

On the bluescreen behind them, red circles with diagonal crossbars surround SIX HEAD SHOTS of the individual WATCHMEN.

JIM

And in Washington today, Senator Norman Keene of Wisconsin introduced legislation which would ban all costumed adventurers nationwide. Easy passage is expected.

(more)

JIM (Cont'd)
(shuffling his
papers)

Well, Sheila, it looks like the
age of the superhero is officially
history.

CUT TO:

EXT. CINEMA - DAY

Kids stream out of the neighborhood movie theatre, making
remarks. Dreiberger shuffles out with Hollis.

DREIBERG
What was I supposed to do, shoot
an innocent woman? I'm not The
Comedian.

HOLLIS
You did what any decent person
would have done.

DREIBERG
The Brain Trust had to be put
away. They're too smart. They're
capable of anything.

Hollis sees how tormented his buddy is.

HOLLIS
Danny, let's go to my place. I'll
make us some fettucine.

DREIBERG
I can't, Hollis. I've got a date.

HOLLIS
A date? Now that's more like it.
Who's the lucky girl?

Despite his despair, Dreiberger can't repress a grin.

DREIBERG
You won't believe this. The Silk
Spectre. -- She called me.

HOLLIS
You dirty dog.

Hollis punches Dreiberger on the arm, and they snicker.

HOLLIS
Hey, what about her old man? I sure
wouldn't want the blue guy sore
at me.

DREIBERG

Oh, we're just friends, Hollis.
It's nothing romantic.

Dreiberg stops at the corner.

HOLLIS

Well, it's good you're getting
out. Have a good time.

DREIBERG

I'll see if I remember how.

They shake hands and go their separate ways. CAMERA pans up to the theatre marquee which announces its double feature: THE WATCHMEN RETURN and WATCHMEN: THE FINAL HOUR.

CUT TO:

INT. RAINBOW ROOM - NIGHT

A pricey joint in midtown, beautiful view, way up high. Dreiberg and Laurie, well-fed, are hard at work on their second bottle of wine. She looks amazingly beautiful in full makeup and low-cut dress.

DREIBERG

So, uh, is everything okay with
you and Jon?

LAURIE

Me and Jon? Yeah, sure.
everything's great.
(wistful)

I just keep thinking I oughta be
doing something with my life.
I mean I only got into this crime-
fighting thing in the first place
to please my mother.

DREIBERG

Well, at least you didn't become
a fascist pig like the Comedian.

LAURIE

Daniel, be fair. It was work for
the Feds or do time. Same for
all of us.

DREIBERG

Fine, but the Civil Terrorism
Unit? It's a fucking Gestapo. We're
talking frame-ups, assassinations,
making people disappear.

Now he's got Laurie nervous. She scans the restaurant
quickly, then leans forward and speaks in hushed tones.

LAURIE

Okay, okay. You made your choice. You went underground. Maybe some of us didn't feel like hiding for the rest our lives.

DREIBERG

So the Comedian goes down as a national hero, while I'm stuck in the psycho file with Rorschach.

Dreiberger sulks. Laurie starts to CHUCKLE.

DREIBERG

What's so funny?

LAURIE

You're still idealistic. -- I think it's sweet.

EXT. ROOFTOP OUTSIDE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Dreiberger and Laurie have retired to the romantic rooftop terrace which overlooks the Manhattan skyline. They're holding big shifters of brandy, and they're both pretty well drunk.

DREIBERG

The pisser is, nobody ever remembers all the good shit we did. I mean, we were heroes!

LAURIE

Damn straight.

DREIBERG

We were the good guys.

LAURIE

Of course, we looked like idiots in those Halloween costumes. That little short skirt, with the cleavage down to my navel. God, it was so demeaning.

DREIBERG

God yes, dreadful.

They share a risque smile.

LAURIE

Remember that nut case who dressed like a villain so we'd beat him up?

DREIBERG

That guy, sure. He followed me
down the street in broad daylight,
begging me to punish him.

They laugh uproariously.

LAURIE

Oh Lord, whatever happened to him?

Dreiberg holds his sides to stop laughing.

DREIBERG

He pulled it on Rorschach...And
Rorschach dropped him down an
elevator shaft.

Laurie looks aghast, then bursts out laughing. Dreiberg
joins in.

LAURIE

Oh God, I'm sorry. That isn't
funny.

They can't stop laughing.

DREIBERG

No. I guess it's not.

They laugh some more, and get a grip on themselves, and
wipe the tears from their eyes, and look at each other.

LAURIE

I haven't laughed like this in...
years.

DREIBERG

Well, here's to The Comedian.
Cause the fact is, he's dead...
and we're not.

As they clink brandy snifters...A CHURCH BELL TOLLS.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A deep-toned BELL continues TOLLING mournfully as rain
drizzles from a gray sky. The perfect day for a funeral.
Guests arrive in black limousines.

There is no weeping, no gnashing of teeth. Most of the
"mourners" are bureaucrats or military men, here for
reasons of protocol. The Street Crazy with "THE END IS
NIGH" sign shuffles by.

SALLY (V.O.)
Sooo, Beautiful, what brings you
to the city of the dead?

INT. SALLY JUPITER'S ROOM / NEPENTHE REST HOME - SAME MOMENT

Laurie enters a private room decorated in rather trashy taste. She carries a bouquet.

LAURIE
Being lazy isn't a terminal condition, Mom, so spare me the "city of the dead" crap. Here, I brought you some flowers.

SALLY JUPITER (JUSPECZYK), the first SILK SPECTRE, sits up in bed and stubs out her cigarette. She wears her grey hair long and girlish. Her lipstick is too thick. The bombshell body ain't what it used to be, but her brash vulgarity is undimmed.

SALLY
Ohhh! Big spender. -- I'll put 'em in some water.

Sally gets out of bed and slips on her robe. Behind her is a framed World War II PIN-UP of Sally in her Silk Spectre costume. It's quite a contrast.

SALLY
Where's Jon?

LAURIE
At some funeral.

EXT. CEMETERY - SAME MOMENT

Dr. Manhattan gets out of his limo, wearing a dark suit and tie.

SALLY (O.S.)
Anybody I know?

The pallbearers remove the coffin from the hearse.

LAURIE (O.S.)
Just some official thing. They made him put clothes on and everything.

INT. SALLY JUPITER'S ROOM - SAME MOMENT

Sally puts the flowers in a vase, which she fills with water.

SALLY
It's Eddie Blake's funeral, right?

VEIDT (O.S.)
The Keene Act is quite clear...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WATCHMEN CLUBHOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON Veidt, in Ozymandias costume without mask. He addresses the Watchmen, who have assembled in their secret hideout after the Statue of Liberty debacle. Rorschach wears his mask and full costume; the others are half-undressed, like actors after a play. The Comedian sprawls to one side, reading a newspaper and smoking a fat cigar, distancing himself from the group. Dreiberger sits with his head in his hands, disconsolate.

VEIDT
It's not enough to stop our activities. We'll be apprehended if we don't reveal our identities and surrender to the authorities.

RORSCHACH
Surrender. Never.

SILK SPECTRE
We don't really have much choice, do we? Unless we want to go on the lam.

DR. MANHATTAN
My friends in the military say they'll get charges dropped if we play ball with them.

DREIBERG
Come on people. How can we just quit while the country still has so many problems that need solving?

COMEDIAN
Oh, bullshit.

DREIBERG
I beg your pardon.

The Comedian puts down his newspaper and stands up.

COMEDIAN
I said bullshit! You guys want to be heroes, but you haven't got the balls to do what needs to be done.

(looks at Dreiberger)
You wanna save the world? You gotta be ready to shed some blood.

DREIBERG
Then you're as bad the people
we're fighting.

VEIDT
I agree with Night Owl, the answer
isn't violence.

He unrolls a map of the world.

VEIDT
Now I have a plan on how we can
continue to fight crime without
capitulating to....

COMEDIAN
Crime? You think crime matters? It
don't matter squat.

The Comedian flicks his cigarette lighter and sets Veidt's map on fire.

VEIDT
What the hell are you doing?

COMEDIAN
The real battle is against the
Russkies, and all these two bit
countries that want their own A-
bombs. If we don't bust 'em now
and violate their sacred fuckin'
rights, the nukes'll be flyin'
inside twenty years. And you
clowns won't have a world left
to save.

The Watchmen watch, paralyzed, as the map of the world goes up in flames.

COMEDIAN
Now pardon me, but I'm going to
"surrender" so I can keep doing
what's important.

The Comedian saunters out. CLOSE ON VEIDT, as he seethes.

CHAPLAIN
...and so we commend our brother
Edward Blake unto God...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY

CLOSE ON VEIDT, whose expression is now pensive.

CHAPLAIN

...who shall change our vile body
that it may be like unto his
glorious body. Amen.

The Chaplain shovels the first load of dirt on top of the coffin. He passes the cowl to the next in line, the Sincere Mourner, who coughs painfully.

SALLY .W.C.

Ya see what one of my fans sent
me?

INT. SALLY'S ROOM - SAME MOMENT

Sally hands Laurie some nudie shots of herself in her prime.

LAURIE

Oh God! Mother, this is disgusting!
Somebody sent you these?

SALLY

I think it's kinda flattering.

LAURIE

Flattering?

SALLY

Being reminded that people used
to slobber over me? Sure, why not?

LAURIE

Doesn't your sleazeball image
bother you? Honestly, Mother,
you...

SALLY

What about your image? At least
I didn't sleep with an H-Bomb.

LAURIE

Jon is not an H-Bomb.

SALLY

Cupcake, the only difference is
that they don't have to get the
H-Bomb laid every once in a while.

Laurie turns away and stares out the window.

SALLY

So tell me somethin'? Does it
really glow in the dark?

EXT. CEMETERY

Adrian Veidt, Dr. Manhattan, and Hollis Mason stand outside the iron gates and shake hands in parting. Bullard approaches the former Watchmen.

BULLARD

Gentlemen, I need to demand your silence about who's in that coffin. At least until this crisis blows over.

VEIDT

Naturally, Bullard. We must hide the truth at all costs.

Veidt turns away and heads toward his limo.

BULLARD

Help me find "the truth," Veidt! Where's Rorschach? Where's the Night Owl? You wouldn't know anything about that, would you?

VEIDT

I haven't seen them in years.

Veidt ducks into his limo and is driven off.

The Sincere Mourner leaves through the cemetery gates and heads down the sidewalk. The Street Crazy shuffles along in the same direction.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREENWICH VILLAGE BROWNSTONE - DUSK

Nice street. VAN parked in front belongs to GORDIAN KNOT LOCK COMPANY. The Sincere Mourner steps out of the driver's seat with some difficulty. He coughs, dry and raspy.

INT. BROWNSTONE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Decorator appliances. Affluent, if not rich. The Sincere Mourner enters, still hacking away. This guy is very ill.

He gets a glass from the cupboard. He opens the fridge.

RORSCHACH

YAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!

A figure lunges out of the fridge, pins the Mourner face down on the floor, grips his neck, and twists his arms painfully behind him.

MOURNER

Oh God, please you're making a
mistake!

RORSCHACH

Edgar William Jacobi, also known
as William Edgar Vaughan, also
known as Moloch.

MOURNER

You've got the wrong person. I'm
a business...AGH!

Rorschach yanks his arm.

RORSCHACH

Lying. Can smell it.

MOURNER

I'm not Moloch any more. I'm
clean.

RORSCHACH

You attended funeral today. Why?

MOLOCH

We were friends.

Rorschach turns Moloch over and holds him by the throat.

RORSCHACH

Scum like you?

MOLOCH

Arh! No! I swear! We met at CTU. --
Bullard got me out of stir. --
I worked with Eddie Blake for
years.

Rorschach sniffs loudly.

RORSCHACH

Unbelievable...
(loosens grip)
Comedian's last case, what was
it?

MOLOCH

Something about The Watchmen, some
old villains. They were supposed
to be dead.

Rorschach viciously throttles him.

RORSCHACH

Which ones?

MOLOCH

(gagging)
Didn't say. I swear.

Rorschach sniffs again. He seems satisfied.

RORSCHACH
Find out. Ask your friends at
CTU.

Rorschach throws him to the floor. Poor Moloch lies at his feet, coughing. A business card lands in front of his face.

RORSCHACH
Meet me here. I'll be waiting.

Rorschach walks out of frame. Moloch looks at the card, which touts the GUNGA DINER.

CUT TO:

INT. JON AND LAURIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Laurie sleeps in the dawn light. A BLUE HAND enters frame and gently strokes her cheek. She smiles, eyes closed.

LAURIE
Jon.....

DR. MANHATTAN
You're so beautiful, baby. You
feel so good.

A SECOND BLUE HAND enters frame and brushes Laurie's neck. She stretches luxuriantly.

LAURIE
When's your interview?

DR. MANHATTAN
We have time.

LAURIE
Mmm, good.

As she sucks one of his fingers, a THIRD BLUE HAND caresses her hip.

Third blue hand? Laurie's eyes go suddenly wide. She sits bolt upright in bed.

TWO NUDE DR. MANHATTANS sandwich her, front and back.

LAURIE
What are you doing? This is sick.

She climbs angrily out of bed and reaches for a dressing gown.

DR. MANHATTAN 1
Laurie, don't be upset.

DR. MANHATTAN 2
You've been complaining our sex
lacks spontaneity.

She collects herself.

LAURIE
You're right, I'm sorry. You
just, you just startled me, is
all.

The big blue twins stand up, spreading their hands in
identical gestures of apology.

DR. MANHATTAN 1 & 2
I'm sorry, Laurie. I don't know
what stimulates you anymore.

LAURIE
Just be one person. One whole
person.

She leaves the bedroom and passes the doorway to a LAB.
To her utter astonishment, she sees a THIRD NUDE DR.
MANHATTAN, calmly running an experiment with beakers of
chemicals.

LAURIE
How the hell long have you been
working out here?!

DR. MANHATTAN 3
Laurie, try to understand. My
work's at a very important...

LAURIE
Understand nothing! You were in
here working while we were in bed!

DR. MANHATTAN 3
You seem to feel I've been
neglecting you. -- I thought I'd
solved the problem quite
elegantly.

Laurie grabs a glass beaker full of colored liquid and
hurls it at Dr. Manhattan 3.

LAURIE
I hate you!

It passes clean through him and smashes on top of a lab
table.

DR. MANHATTAN 3
Laurie...

LAURIE

I'm leaving, that's it! I can't take it any more.

DR. MANHATTAN 3

Don't be childish. Let's talk this out.

LAURIE

It's over! I'm leaving!

Laurie storms out, pushing past Dr. Manhattan 1 & 2, who've been watching from the doorway.

DR. MANHATTAN 1

If you think there's a problem with my attitude, I'm prepared to discuss it.

DR. MANHATTAN 2

Laurie...?

Alone in the lab, Dr. Manhattan 3, by sheer force of mind, reassembles the broken beaker. The glass shards and the spilt liquid come back together in his hand.

CUT TO:

INT. VEIDT'S OFFICE - DUSK

Veidt sits in front of a towering VIDEO WALL -- 200 monitors in a 10 x 20 grid, picking up transmissions from all over the world. It's far more information than the normal human mind could possibly digest. Veidt soaks it all in with rapt attention.

Most of the screens are news broadcasts, reporting on the winds of war which are spreading across the globe like an epidemic. Some of them report on a GIGANTIC FIRE burning in the jungle. Others show the cause of the fire, a GIGANTIC EXPLOSION during a ROCKET LAUNCH.

NEWCASTER

...entire facility was destroyed, and over three hundred Veidt employees died, including some of the foremost scientists in their fields. Company chairman Adrian Veidt extended his condolences and pledged to continue the work they have begun....

Rorschach ambles in front of the screens.

RORSCHACH

Have new information. Confirms theory.

VEIDT
How'd you get in here?

RORSCHACH
Old villains back in business.
Comedian investigating when
killed.

VEIDT
I don't give a shit about your
paranoid conspiracies!
(points to monitors)
My whole complex in Paraguay blew
skyhigh this morning during a
launch.

RORSCHACH
Sabotage. Obviously connected.

Veidt, unconvinced, heads for the door.

VEIDT
I have a meeting with the
insurance company. Please leave
the way you came.

He stalks out, leaving Rorschach in front of the Video Wall, overshadowed by multiple images of Veidt being interviewed.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DUSK

Dreiberg walks in, looks around, and spots Laurie. She sits at a booth, looking very glum. He walks over.

DREIBERG
Laurie...Hi.

LAURIE
Thanks for coming.

He sits down. She's holding back tears.

DREIBERG
What's the matter?

LAURIE
Nothing earth-shattering,
really...I left Jon.

Laurie starts to cry. Dreiberger wants to comfort her, put his arm around her. But he can't muster the nerve.

DREIBERG
I don't know what to say. Uh...
How's he taking it?

LAURIE

He hasn't got any real emotions left. He pretends to, but we're all just particles to him.

INT. DR. MANHATTAN'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Dr. Manhattan sits, naked, on the side of the bed, examining Laurie's brassiere like it's a scientific specimen.

LAURIE (V.O.)

Right now he's probably getting dressed for his TV interview, like nothing even happened.

He makes clothes float out of the closet and hover in mid-air in front of him. He stands up. His pants, socks, shirt, shoes, coat, and tie wrap themselves onto his body.

INT. COFFEE SHOP

Laurie grows nostalgic.

LAURIE

He was so passionate, Daniel. You remember. He cared about things. He loved me. -- Can you imagine what it's like to be loved by a god?

Dreiberger feels rather intimidated.

LAURIE

I'm sorry. I don't know why I'm dumping all this on you. I just don't know anybody else...

INT. DR. MANHATTAN'S BEDROOM

Dr. Manhattan stands in front of a mirror and adjusts his tie.

LAURIE (O.S.)

I don't know anybody except goddamned superheroes.

Satisfied with his appearance, Dr. Manhattan disappears.

INT. TV STUDIO - NIGHT

TECHNICIANS running to and fro. A harried DIRECTOR checks the green room, where the STAFF is beginning to panic.

DIRECTOR

We're on the air in five minutes! Where the hell is that goddamn blue son of a --

He gags himself in mid-sentence as Dr. Manhattan materializes in front of him.

DR. MANHATTAN
I'm sorry. Am I late?

DIRECTOR
No no, no problem. We better head straight for the set. -- I'm Kent Turner, the director.

The Director shakes Dr. Manhattan's hand and marches him down a hallway. Within seconds, they're joined by Bullard and Adamson, the CTU agent in dark glasses.

BULLARD
Jon, I want to do a quick run-through on policy, make sure we're in sync. When they ask about India and China...

INT. COFFEE SHOP

The waitress refills Dan and Laurie's mugs with coffee.

DREIBERG
Where are you gonna stay? Did you call your mother?

LAURIE
Oh, she'd love that. I'd rather sleep on a park bench.

An awkward moment.

DREIBERG
I wish I could offer you a place, Laurie, but people would recognize you and...

LAURIE
No, I understand.

DREIBERG
I'm still wanted.

He glances around to see if they're being watched.

LAURIE
Don't worry; I ditched my bodyguards at Macy's.

Dreiberger, embarrassed, grabs the check from the waitress.

DREIBERG
I'll take it.

As Dreiberger gets out his wallet, Laurie stands and pulls her suitcase from under the table.

LAURIE

Well, I'm gonna head on over to the Y. They've got cheap rooms, and I'm out of a job, too.

DREIBERG

Can I walk you there?

LAURIE

If you don't think it's too risky.

Ashamed, he picks up her suitcase. They head for the door.

INT. TV STUDIO

Dr. Manhattan is surrounded by a cluster of SOUND MEN, PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS, ETC. who are hurriedly prepping him for the telecast.

FLOOR MANAGER

Doc, that blue of yours tends to wash out on camera. Could you give us something a little darker maybe?

Dr. Manhattan pauses briefly. His skin tone darkens two shades.

DR. MANHATTAN

Will this do?

DIRECTOR

Perfect.

BULLARD

Now, Jon, on global warming, steer clear of any definite commitments. Same goes for ozone depletion. Don't let the liberals guilt-trip you.

FLOOR MANAGER

Doc, if you'd take your seat.

Dr. Manhattan is shown to his chair as the "ABC NEWS SPECIAL REPORT" graphic comes on screen, with THEME MUSIC underneath. The STAGE MANAGER points, and the broadcast begins.

INSERT - TV MONITOR

Documentary footage of JON OSTERMAN trapped inside a primitive cyclotron in 1945. Bombarded by blinding light, he pounds on the small window in agony.

BRINKLEY (V.O.)

Dr. Manhattan: the nuclear titan spawned in a freak scientific mishap. For almost fifty years, he has protected the world from natural disasters, toxic catastrophes, and civil unrest.

A tidal wave rolls toward Miami. Dr. Manhattan points, and the wave vaporizes. A nuclear reactor explodes. Dr. Manhattan points, and the explosion reverses itself. A mob riots in the streets. Dr. Manhattan points, and the mob is suddenly standing in the desert in their overcoats.

BRINKLEY (V.O.)

More than that, Dr. Manhattan has been the linchpin of American's military strategy. Together he and the Soviet superman, COMRADE JUSTICE, created a worldwide balance of terror that assured the peace.

Dr. Manhattan, 60 feet tall, stands next to fighter planes, tanks, and aircraft carriers. Comrade Justice does the same. Then we see Comrade Freedom's military funeral parade.

BRINKLEY (V.O.)

Since Comrade Justice died of cancer in 1991, we now face a new world order with only one superhuman -- and one superpower, the United States.

INT. STAGE

A sparse news interview show set, with a table for four journalists to ask questions of Dr. Manhattan. DAVID BRINKLEY moderates.

BRINKLEY

Tonight we discuss this situation with Dr. Manhattan himself. Welcome.

APPLAUSE. Dr. Manhattan sits there blankly. Bullard looks worried.

BRINKLEY

I suppose the topic on everyone's mind is the looming war between India and China. Will you intervene to prevent a nuclear exchange?

DR. MANHATTAN
I hope that won't be necessary,
David.

BRINKLEY
But if hostilities do break out?

DR. MANHATTAN
(a beat)
The nations of this planet must
learn to resolve their differences
peacefully. -- This is not my
responsibility.

Bullard and Adamson look at each other, concerned.

EXT. SIDE STREET - NIGHT

Dreiberg and Laurie walk down a deserted street. He carries her suitcase. The SOUNDTRACK of the interview plays over the scene.

PEOPLE MAGAZINE (O.S.)
Are you and the Silk Spectre going
to get married any time soon? And
do you think you're setting a good
example for American's youth?

EIGHT TOPKNOTS step in front of them and emerge from doorways. They brandish long knives.

BRINKLEY (O.S.)
We agreed that Dr. Manhattan would
not be asked any personal
questions. Next please...

The Topknots back Laurie and Dreiberg against a wall. They look at each other and come to an unspoken understanding. Dreiberg takes off his glasses.

INT. STAGE

NEW YORK TIMES
Now that Comrade Justice is dead,
will you continue to be the
exclusive agent of the United
States government?

DR. MANHATTAN
No. My concerns are for the
entire human race.

Bullard and Adamson are now alarmed.

BULLARD
He's flipping out.

EXT. SIDE STREET - NIGHT

The Topknots holds knives to Dreiberger's and Laurie's throats. He reaches for his wallet, then abruptly, they both bash aside their attacker's arms. They spring on the offensive and brilliantly disarm and subdue their would-be muggers.

Dreiberger's style is straightforward and defensive, with a certain superhero panache that sends his opponents tumbling.

Laurie's style is surprisingly brutal and bone-crunching. She's the muscle of the pair. And her sound-effects should make you cringe. We're talking years of pent up frustration and rage -- and perhaps some repressed anger against men, to judge by the target of her blows.

On the soundtrack, Journalists badger Dr. Manhattan with a barrage of overlapping demands and accusations that swell into a maddening wallop.

NEW YORK TIMES (O.S.)

With the Communist threat ended,
don't you think your abilities
could be put to better use solving
problems of the inner city?

CNN (O.S.)

What about the environment?
Greenpeace complains you're not
doing enough to clean up the
planet. :

CBS (O.S.)

Is there a role for you in
achieving zero population growth?

BRINKLEY (O.S.)

What are you doing to find a cure
for AIDS?

Laurie and Dreiberger finish off the Topknots and look around for more. When they realize they're safe, they almost collapse from exertion, panting and wiping their brows. Dreiberger rests a hand on Laurie's shoulder for support.

INT. STAGE

A hostile journalist in CLOSE-UP.

NBC

How will you prevent the use of
nuclear weapons?

Dr. Manhattan in CLOSE-UP. A very faraway look.

DR. MANHATTAN

I'm afraid human beings must learn
to solve their problems without
my help.

CNN

Are you saying you no longer
consider yourself a human being?

Dr. Manhattan stares blankly as the live audience waits
for him to answer. Brinkley waits. Bullard waits. The
Director waits...

DR. MANHATTAN

My work here has ended.

And before the message has a chance to sink in, Dr.
Manhattan disappears, and his empty clothes crumple to the
floor.

While everyone else is still reacting with shock, Bullard
is already responding to the disaster. As if it were
inevitable. As if he sees the bright side. Like when the
Statue of Liberty blew up.

BULLARD

Get me the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

EXT. INTERSECTION - NIGHT

Recovering their breath, Dreiberger and Laurie walk out of
the dark side street, proud of themselves and rather
surprised. The YWCA is just a few yards away.

DREIBERG

Laurie, look, forget the "Y." I've
got a spare room, and I'd really
like you to...

LAURIE

No, it's too risky, Dan. Really.

DREIBERG

Look, we're friends, and friends
help each other. That's all there
is to it.

He picks up her suitcase.

LAURIE

You're sure?

DREIBERG

Positive. I'm ashamed of myself.

He starts walking. She follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERTED MANSION - NIGHT

CAMERA glides around the magnificent ramshackle estate.

LAURIE (V.O.)
That was your house?

DREIBERG (V.O.)
Until I went bankrupt. I used
up my inheritance being Night Owl.

LAURIE (V.O.)
I figured you musta been rich to
afford all those gizmos.

Lights are on in the servants' quarters.

DREIBERG (V.O.)
Well, this all I've got left, the
servants quarters.

INT. DREIBERG'S HOUSE / GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Dreiberg fidgets awkwardly as Laurie unpacks her overnight bag. The room is furnished with some of the nice things left over from the mansion.

LAURIE
Believe me, after where I thought
I'd be sleeping tonight, this is
a palace.

DREIBERG
Well, I'm right down the hall.
if you need anything. -- I mean
like coffee or aspirin, stuff like
that.

LAURIE
I'm just gonna take a bath and
sack out. -- You've been really
sweet.

She gives him a sisterly peck on the cheek. He can't quite get himself to leave.

LAURIE
Sleep tight, okay?

DREIBERG
You, too.

Laurie turns away, and Dreiberг finally exits.

INT. HALLWAY

As he closes the door, he gets a glimpse, from behind, of Laurie unbuttoning her shirt. He quickly averts his gaze and pulls the door shut.

Full of longing and torment, he looks out the window, up at the starry sky.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OUTER SPACE - NIGHT

The Milky Way. The cold white moon. Far away, half the Earth in shadow. From frame right, a BLUE FIGURE swings into view. It's Dr. Manhattan in the lotus position, sitting on nothingness. Stars twinkle behind him as he looks down at our little planet. His normally inscrutable features are tinged with regret.

He holds out his arms, as if cradling the distant ball in his hands. He stays like that a moment, thinking. Then he moves his hands apart.

The "ball" doesn't drop. It floats there without his help.

Dr. Manhattan turns away from the Earth and gracefully stretches into a diving position, as if ready to fly off into deep space. CAMERA moves so that the sun comes into view behind him, surrounding him with a brilliant aura, like an eclipse.

He vanishes, and we are left staring into the sun.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURIE'S ROOM / DREIBERG'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Laurie sleeps soundly. Her breasts rise and fall under the sheets as she breathes. A shadow slides across her.

She springs out the bed just as a gloved hand flicks on the table lamp. She is illuminated, coiled to fight, dressed only in an oversized T-shirt.

RORSCHACH
Miss Juspeczyk. Should have suspected.

LAURIE
What do you want, you pervert?

RORSCHACH
Second Watchman gone.

He throws a newspaper onto the bed. Laurie looks down at the half-page headline: DR. MANHATTAN LEAVES EARTH. She is aghast.

RORSCHACH
Convenient for you and Daniel.

LAURIE
You think I wanted this?

Rorschach stares at her a beat, then turns away and walks toward the open sash window.

LAURIE
(defensive)
Okay, so what if he's gone? It's not the end of the world.

RORSCHACH
(looks back)
Are you sure?

Rorschach climbs out the window. Laurie stands there, then lowers her head, guilt-ridden.

CUT TO:

INT. STRATEGY ROOM / PENTAGON - NIGHT

Bullard and the Joint Chiefs of Staff have convened in a room filled with maps.

BULLARD
Gentlemen, a new world order is taking shape at this very moment, and we need to make an important decision.

He pauses, establishing a feeling of command.

BULLARD
Who's going to fill the vacuum left by Dr. Manhattan?

CUT TO:

INT. RORSCHACH'S HOVEL - DAY

RORSCHACH'S POV: CLOSE ON TV SCREEN. A special news report in progress. Maps pertaining to the border conflict between India and China. The nations are color coded into two alliances.

NEWSCASTER
The President declared that U.S. foreign policy would be under intensive review in the wake of Dr. Manhattan's exodus. It may no longer be feasible, he stated, for the United States to serve as the world's policeman.

Rorschach's POV scans the room: filthy plates, open tin cans of beans with roaches crawling out, newspaper and magazine clippings stacked in messy piles up to the ceiling.

RORSCHACH (V.O.)
Woken at eleven by babies crying.
Dogs barking. Everyone afraid
of war.

POV "opens door" and finds Rorschach's LANDLADY, a sloppy harridan who's lost her looks. Her brood of urchins recoils on seeing Rorschach.

RORSCHACH (V.O.)
On way out, met landlady. Purple
bite marks on her fat white neck.
Fresh ones. -- Reminds me of my
mother.

EXT. RORSCHACH'S NEIGHBORHOOD - DUSK

RORSCHACH'S MOVING POV of people standing in crowds, talking, listening to the news, engaged with each other.

RORSCHACH (V.O.)
Streets crowded. Facing doom,
they find brotherhood. Too late.

POV pans to the GUNGA DINER, an Indian fast-food joint. Moloch paces impatiently in front, waiting for Rorschach. POV approaches him. Moloch glances toward camera, but his gaze glides by without recognition. POV tracks past him.

RORSCHACH (V.O.)
Moloch appears at rendez-vous
alone. Doesn't recognize me
without face. Will visit later
tonight.

CUT TO:

INT. DREIBERG'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dreiberg and Laurie prepare for dinner. They're in a festive mood. He peppers a nice thick steak. She chops onions with a large knife.

LAURIE
He'll be back. He's just trying
to punish me. Basically, he's
a big baby who's used to getting
his way.
(stops chopping)
How's that?

DREIBERG
Perfect. Now open this up and
let it breathe.

He hands her a wine bottle and scrapes the onions into a
skillet with hot oil.

LAURIE
Mmm, Chateau Lafitte.

DREIBERG
'57, my last bottle; I've been
saving it. -- The corkscrew's in
that drawer there.

She gets the corkscrew and sets to work.

LAURIE
Daniel, if you don't mind my
asking, what've you been doing
with yourself all these years?

He's afraid to say.

DREIBERG
I'm, uh, I'm an orderly over at
the Veterans hospital.
(forces a grin)
Those guys are leftovers, too.

LAURIE
You never tried to patent your
inventions? You could've gotten
rich.

She pulls out the cork.

DREIBERG
I don't know. I never could get
up the energy...since that day.

She puts down the bottle and the corkscrew, and looks at
him with compassion.

LAURIE
Oh Daniel, I don't know about you,
but getting out of that costume
was the best thing that ever
happened to me.

DREIBERG
I just feel like ever since the
world has just gone to shit.

LAURIE
It's not our fault.
(pours wine)
The mistake was thinking we could
do anything about it in the first
place.

She holds out a glass of red wine.

LAURIE
Now drink this. It's time we
started enjoying our lives.

He takes the glass and manages a smile.

LAURIE
Before the world blows up.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

POV: Loose garbage and overturned trash cans. Hands lift a plywood panel from a wall, revealing Rorschach's costume.

RORSCHACH (V.O.)
My things were where I left them.
Putting them on, I abandoned my
disguise and became myself, free
from fear or weakness or lust.

POV looks at the mask, puts it on -- covering lens.

EXT. SIDE STREET - NIGHT

Rorschach's POV tracking through degenerate slum, searching for some crime to punish.

RORSCHACH (V.O.)
Three hours before visiting
Moloch...Heard woman scream.

POV tracks toward an alley and discovers TWO FIGURES groping in the distance. The MAN holds a knife.

RORSCHACH (V.O.)
Attempted rape/mugging.
(clears throat)
Announced my presence.

RAPIST looks aggressively from VICTIM to CAMERA. On seeing Rorschach, his vicious leer melts to abject panic.

RORSCHACH (V.O.)
The look in his eyes...

Rorschach's gloved hands rise into his POV, and we see that he grasps a GAROTTE, ready to strangle the terrified criminal to death.

RCRSCHACH (V.O.)
...extremely rewarding.

CUT TO:

INT. DREIBERG'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Laurie carries dirty dishes into the kitchen as Dreiberger makes espresso.

LAURIE
The worst thing about Jon is he doesn't age. When I met him, he was this dashing older man of thirty-four, and I was seventeen.

DREIBERG
I remember.

LAURIE
Well, on my last birthday, I was a year older than him. -- It's hell on a girl's ego, lemme tell ya.

He sweeps back his thinning hair.

DREIBERG
I must make you feel great.

LAURIE
(flirtatious)
Actually, I've always had a thing for older men. Prob'lly cause I never knew my father.

He hands her an espresso, and she heads back to the living room. The TV is on, and Adrian Veidt is being interviewed.

LAURIE
Oh look, it's Adrian.

Dreiberger deflates at the mention of that name.

ON TV, Veidt and a SPORTS COMMENTATOR appear in close-up. Behind them, Madison Square Garden is packed.

VEIDT
...that the solution to the current crisis is a legitimate world government.
(more)

VEIDT (Cont'd)
But for that to happen, Bob, the
human race needs to make an
evolutionary leap to global
consciousness. We have to
overcome tribal loyalties which...

Laurie and Daniel sit down on the sofa and watch.

LAURIE
Why can't he just shut up and look
beautiful?

DREIBERG
Because unlike us, my dear, he's
still trying to save the world.

LAURIE
Yeah, and knowing him, he'll
probably succeed.

She chuckles, but he's glum.

DREIBERG
Laurie, why didn't you call Adrian
when you needed a place to stay?
He's rich. He's handsome. He's
hung like an elephant.

LAURIE
Daniel! -- I've already had the
perfect specimen, the superman.
And lemme tell ya, it's no great
shakes.

She sighs with painful memory.

LAURIE
What I need now is somebody who
can care about me.

Laurie looks at him, vulnerable and needy. And he gazes
at her, years of longing still bottled up. She reaches
over and takes off his glasses. -- He's much better looking
without them.

She plants a soft kiss on his lips.

He's not sure what to do. She takes his face in her hands
and kisses him hungrily. He puts his arms around her,
rather uncertain.

She pushes him down on the couch.

DREIBERG
Laurie, are you sure...?

LAURIE

Shhhh.

She gets on top and presses against him. She moves with liquid grace.

TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

And now ladies and gentlemen,
performing live to benefit the
Veidt World Peace Foundation, we
present the one, the only...
OZYMANDIAS!!!!

She straddles Daniel and unbuttons his shirt. In the background, we see the TV SCREEN. Adrian Veidt, now dressed as Ozymandias, steps on stage at Madison Square Garden for a gymnastic exhibition on his special rigging.

VEIDT

Thank you. I hope my performance will inspire you to believe that anything is possible when you set your mind to it -- even world peace.

Veidt jumps up on the parallel bar with perfect confidence and effortlessly performs a routine which no human being could duplicate without special effects and great editing.

As Daniel and Laurie try to make love, Veidt is always there, in the background, in between them, intercut. It's more like a montage than a real-time sequence.

LAURIE

Here, let me move around.

They awkwardly change places. He gets on top.

DREIBERG

I'm sorry. Am I crushing you?

LAURIE

No, it's okay. Don't worry.

ANNOUNCER

Moving up into the handstand now...Notice there's not the slightest tremor of effort. It's all one smooth, seamless flow of motion.

She's filled with desire, but he's distant, panicky, unable to respond. She takes his hand and places it on her breast.

LAURIE

Mmmmm...

ANNOUNCER
And he moves now into his first
set piece -- oh, this is
absolutely breathtaking.

Dreiberg fumbles with the buttons on her blouse.

LAURIE
Here, let me do that...

She opens her blouse, revealing the breasts of a goddess.
Hesitantly, he caresses one. She moans. Then she yelps.

LAURIE
Agh! Dan!

DREIBERG
I'm sorry, what is it?

Her eyes roll, but when she faces him she's kind.

LAURIE
Nothing, your elbow. If you just
lift yourself a little I could...

She slides her pants down over her hips, over those
magnificent thighs.

ANNOUNCER
The grace of each movement is
extraordinary. This is a man in
his forties.

The audience sighs...OOOOOHHHHHHH!

ANNOUNCER
Just listen to that crowd as he
switches his grip there.

Things aren't going well for Daniel. His belly's too big.
It's been too long. He's panicking. She unzips his
pants. Sticks her hand inside.

LAURIE
Dan?

DREIBERG
It's okay. I just need a minute
to...

Fondling him...

LAURIE
Take your time, honey. We've got
all night.

ANNOUNCER

He's spinning through the air,
three, FOUR twists!....And he's
down. A perfect Hecht dismount.
I've never seen anything like it!!

Finally Daniel can't stand it any more. With a pained,
stricken look, Daniel pushes her away and sits up on the
sofa. His head sinks into his hands.

DREIBERG

I'm sorry, Laurie. It's not you.
I just...

She kneels on the sofa beside him.

LAURIE

Daniel, it's okay. We don't have
to rush things. You were doing
fine.

The audience gives Veidt a standing ovation. He bows
fuisomely.

Laurie picks up the remote control and mutes the volume.
She kneels on the sofa beside him and puts her arms around
his big shoulders.

LAURIE

Lie down with me. Hold me.-- Just
hold me.

She eases him down and lies with her head on his chest.

Daniel stares at the ceiling. Humiliated.

CUT TO:

INT. MOLOCH'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The TV is tuned to Veidt's encore. Moloch sits in an easy
chair, his back to camera, seemingly glued to the tube.
Rorschach slips up behind him.

RORSCHACH

Saw you at Diner. What do you
have?

No reply.

RORSCHACH

Moloch?

Rorschach casts a cautious glance around the room. He
creeps up behind Moloch, lays a hand on his shoulder.

REVERSE ANGLE ON MOLOCH

He's staring at the TV screen with sightless eyes. There's a NEAT ROUND BULLETHOLE in the center of his forehead. THE GUN that did it lies on the floor.

RORSCHACH
(to himself)
Stupid.

AN AMPLIFIED VOICE booms from outside.

BULLARD (O.S.)
RORSCHACH! THIS IS BULLARD. IT'S
ALL OVER.

Rorschach dashes to the window and peeks through the blinds.

EXT. MOLOCH'S BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

On the street outside, CTU CARS are massing, blocking off the intersection. A CTU SWAT TEAM prepares to raid the building. Bullard stands next to a car, speaking into a mike.

BULLARD.
IF THERE'S ANYBODY IN THERE WITH
YOU, SEND THEM OUT NOW UNHARMED.

INT. MOLOCH'S BROWNSTONE

RORSCHACH
Stupid, stupid, stupid.

Rorschach rushes into the kitchen.

BULLARD
THEN YOU FOLLOW WITH BOTH HANDS
VISIBLE. I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU
THIRTY SECONDS.

He flings open cupboards, collects a plastic MOP BUCKET, plus an armload of bottles and aerosol cans -- ordinary household supplies.

BULLARD
C'MON, RORSCHACH. LET'S MAKE THIS
A NICE CLEAN SURRENDER.

RORSCHACH
Never.

EXT. MOLOCH'S BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Bullard gives the signal. A SWAT TEAM stealthily approaches the front door.

INT. MOLOCH'S KITCHEN

Rorschach rummages under the sink; takes more bottles: cleaning fluid, rubbing alcohol, Drano.

He moves to the gas stove, turns on all the burners -- and blows out the flames.

INT. BROWNSTONE - FRONT STAIRWELL

ARMED CTU COPS rushing silently up the stairs.

INT. MOLOCH'S LIVING ROOM

Rorschach dousing the living room carpet with charcoal lighter and rubbing alcohol. A PILE OF BOTTLES -- half-full -- resting next to the front door.

The CTU COPS pound on the front door, trying to break it down. Rorschach crouches in the hallway just outside the living room.

The door finally gives way, and the COPS tumble in. Rorschach strikes a match and holds it to the nozzle of an AEROSOL CAN -- creating a miniature FLAMETHROWER which blasts in the COPS' FACES, then sweeps to the carpet, which ignites -- and a moment later, the PILE OF BOTTLES EXPLODES, engulfing the doorway in flame.

KITCHEN

Rorschach backs out of the living room with his bucket. SMOKE billows in. He empties TWO BOTTLES OF COOKING OIL on the linoleum floor, then ducks through a door into the BACK STAIRWELL.

INT. STAIRWELL LANDING

Rorschach opens a bottle of CLEANING FLUID, stuffs a wad of newspaper into its neck. The first wave of COPS -- coughing and hacking from the smoke -- makes it into the kitchen just as he IGNITES his Molotov Cocktail and TOSSES IT INSIDE.

The Cops pitch backwards as the bottle blows up. By the time they hit the floor, the COOKING OIL has burst into flame.

Rorschach bolts up the stairs. Another squad of CTU COPS is coming up the back way behind him.

INT. KITCHEN

Charred COPS, leaping FLAMES. CAMERA ZEROES IN on the GAS STOVE.

EXT. TENEMENT - NIGHT

A gaping hole BLOWS OPEN in the front of the building. FIERY RUBBLE hails down on the CTU units outside.

INT. BACK STAIRWELL

Rorschach huddled on the uppermost landing, just below roof level. By now the whole building is ablaze. Two flights down, a pair of CTU COPS are fighting their way through the inferno, still on his tail.

He still has his mop bucket; it's half full of water. He reaches for his last weapon -- a can of DRANO -- and empties it into the bucket, where it begins to HISS and SIZZLE.

The COPS are almost on him, racing upward two stairs at a time. He steps out in front of them and HEAVES THE BUCKETFUL OF BOILING DRANO in their faces.

The Cops SCREAM and topple backwards into the flames as Rorschach turns tail and bursts through the door to the roof.

EXT. MOLOCH'S BROWNSTONE ROOF - NIGHT

Rorschach emerges -- and a BLINDING LIGHT catches him full in the face. Hovering not twenty feet overhead is a CTU AIRSHIP. A spray of MACHINE-GUN FIRE peppers the roof.

Rorschach scuttles along the edge of the roof, finds a rickety FIRE ESCAPE, and dives over. But he is now exposed on the front of the building -- pinned to the wall by gunfire from the SWAT TEAM on the street.

TONGUES OF FLAME dart from nearby windows. He turns and tries to climb back up, but MORE COPS -- from the hovering AIRSHIP -- are already spilling over the edge of the roof.

Rorschach is hopelessly cornered. With an ungodly HOWL OF FURY, he dives over the metal railing and plunges to the street below.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Three stories down, he crashes into a cluster of garbage cans -- and lies there, spent, twisted, wracked with pain. The CTU COPS are on him instantly, kicking him, bashing him with billy clubs and rifle butts.

COPS
GET HIM! GET HIS MASK! LET'S SEE
THE LITTLE FUCKER'S FACE!!

RORSCHACH
GNAAAAAHH!! NO!! NO!!

A HALF DOZEN CTUs try to restrain Rorschach and pull off his mask. He bucks, kicks, writhes like a wild animal. When they've got his body pinned down, he lifts up his head, defiant -- and there's Bullard, standing over him.

Bullard bends down and rips the elastic mask off Rorschach's head.

RORSCHACH
NCOOOOCO!!!!

A pock-marked, doughy face zapped off by a shock of matted RED HAIR. It's the STREET CRAZY with the placard announcing the end of the world.

RORSCHACH
Give it back!! Give it back!!

Bullard stares at him intently.

COP 1
That's the terror of the underworld? That ugly little zero?

COP 2
Christ, he's got five inch heels.
The fuckin' runt wears elevator
shoes!

RORSCHACH
GIVE ME BACK MY FACE!!!

Bullard brings back his leg and kicks Rorschach square in the mouth.

CUT TO:

INT. DREIBERG'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dreiberg and Laurie lie on the sofa in the dark. The pale blue light of the TV flickers on the walls. He stares up at the ceiling, still devastated.

His gaze drifts over to the TV. Suddenly he BLANCHES.

On the TV is a huge bluescreen close-up of Rorschach. Dreiberg reaches for the remote control to turn up the volume.

DREIBERG
Laurie, wake up.

LAURIE
(groggy)
What is it?

TV ANCHOR

...A ten year manhunt ended tonight with the capture of the masked vigilante and former Watchman known as Rorschach. Eight CTU agents were injured in the violent confrontation at the scene of a reported murder.

The news report CUTS LIVE to the smoking wreckage of the brownstone.

LAURIE

Eight Feds, oh great. A jury's gonna love that.

DREIBERG

Are you kidding? If they put him in jail, he's dead. He'll never get to trial.

TV ANCHOR

...latest victim was found dead of a single gunshot wound to the head. The murder weapon was found at the scene.

Now the screen shows side-by-side close-ups of the inkblot mask and the acne-scarred face beneath it. Laurie looks on, transfixed.

TV ANCHOR

Rorschach has been identified as Walter Joseph Kovacs, 44, a religious fanatic with a history of psychological disorders...

Laurie settles back and lets out a low whistle. Dreiberger stands up and runs his hands through his hair.

LAURIE

I just realized I'd never seen his face.

(beat)

I guess it was just a matter of time. He's totally -- Daniel? What's wrong?

DREIBERG

The Comedian...Jon...now Rorschach?

He stares at her, obviously wondering: who's next?

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON RORSCHACH. His face is bruised and bandaged. Teeth missing. One eyelid is swollen. He stares blankly.

DR. LONG (O.S.)

Walter, my name is Dr. Long. My job is to evaluate your mental condition and determine if you're fit to stand trial.

Rorschach sits on one side of a small square table in a bare windowless chamber, 10' by 10'. DR. LONG, 48, African-American, sits opposite. He is a good man, decent, compassionate. He picks up a stack of white cards.

DR. LONG

Now, you obviously know what these are. I want you to look at each card as I turn it over and tell me what it reminds you of. All right?

Rorschach stares right through the psychiatrist. Dr. Long turns over the first card, a symmetrical inkblot -- part of a Rorschach test.

Rorschach picks up the card and stares at it. His eyes subtly widen as if looking at something horrifying.

CN INKBLOT

DR. LONG (O.S.)

The first thing that comes into your mind.

The inkblot flashes into the head of a German Shepherd lying in a pool of its own blood. Just a flash...

BACK TO SCENE

Rorschach's eyes revert to their usual preternatural calm.

RORSCHACH

Dog. Head of a dog.

Long nods, makes a notation on a pad, turns up the next card. Rorschach looks at it. Again he seems upset.

INKBLOT #2

transforms into the SILHOUETTE OF A MAN AND A WOMAN, face to face, sitting on a bed, FUCKING. The act is crude and loveless. The MAN turns to CAMERA, discovering the witness.

MAN
Hey, what is this? You didn't say
you had no kids around here!

We notice that our POV is low, childlike. The Woman turns and locks down at us, furious.

WOMAN
Ah shit!
(to Man)
Ignore him, honey. He don't
understand nothing.

She furiously signals us to leave, but we're frozen in place.

MAN
Forget it, lady. I get enough
of this crap at home.

The Man slouches off the bed and pulls on his trousers. The Woman charges toward us.

MOTHER
Get back in your room, ya little
bastard! Ya know what you just cost
me?

The Woman raises her arm to slap us...

DR. LONG (O.S.)
Well, Walter, what do you make
of it?

BACK TO INTERROGATION ROOM

Rorschach lowers the card.

RORSCHACH
Flowers. A bouquet.

Dr. Long eyes him skeptically, makes another note. Turns up the third card.

INKBLOT #3

transforms into THE FACE OF A TERRIFIED LITTLE RED-HAIRED BOY. This is the boy's POV as he stares into a mirror. Someone stands behind him and smashes his head into the mirror, cracking it and leaving his face cut and bloody. The Little Boy, too shocked to cry, looks incredulously in the cracked mirror at his Mother who stands behind him, her face contorted with anger and hate.

MOTHER
I shoulda had the fuckin'
abortion!

BACK TO RORSCHACH

RORSCHACH

A butterfly.

Dr. Long heaves a sigh of frustration.

DR. LONG

Walter....

RORSCHACH

That's not my name.

DR. LONG

Walter-- you're just telling me
what you think I want to hear.

RORSCHACH

Wrong answers?

DR. LONG

There is no right or wrong. But
if you don't give me an honest
response, I can't help you.

(beat)

I want to help you.

Rorschach shifts his gaze infinitessimally and stares
straight into Dr. Long's eyes -- inviting him to look into
the very heart of darkness.

The psychiatrist finds it almost unbearable. He gropes
under the table and presses a buzzer to summon the guards.

DR. LONG

Have it your way, Walter. Let
me know when you decide to be
cooperative.

TWO PRISON GUARDS enter through a steel door. Rorschach
stands up.

RORSCHACH

You don't want to help me. You
want to know what makes me sick.

The Guards escort him toward the door.

RORSCHACH

You'll find out...You'll find out.

Dr. Long is left alone in the cell. It takes him a moment
to recover.

INT. PRISON CELL BLOCK - DAY

The two Guards escort Rorschach back to his cell. It's a long walk past the cells of other prisoners. They shout at him as he passes.

PRISCNERS

You're dead, Rorschach! You're meat! / Gonna cut you, sissy. Gone hold you down and peel you like a grape. / You gonna beg, baby. You gonna make in your grays. / You got a mother, Rorschach? She's dead! You got a sister? Dead!

The Guards lock Rorschach in his cell. . .

GUARD

I'm glad I'm not you, man, locked up with these sickos.

RORSCHACH

I'm not locked up with them. They're locked up with me.

The Guards look at each other, spooked, and walk off.

Rorschach remains at the bars, standing stiffly, fearless.

CUT TO:

INT. VEIDT'S OFFICE / WAITING ROOM - DAY

Dreiberg argues with MISS WILCOX, Veidt's crusty, middle-aged PERSONAL SECRETARY. They've been at it for a while.

MISS WILCOX

I'm sorry. No one sees Mr. Veidt without an appointment.

DREIBERG

We're very old friends. If you'd just tell him I'm here, I'm sure...

MISS WILCOX

Mr. Veidt is quite insistent about...

Veidt and his entourage pour out of his office and sweep through the waiting room.

DREIBERG

Adrian!

Veidt sees Dreiberger. His first reaction betrays his disdain before he quickly pastes on a smile.

VEIDT

Daniel, you really did pick the worst time.

DREIBERG

(nervous)

Can we talk?

Veidt sighs impatiently, but gestures to Miss Wilcox and takes Dreiberger to the side.

DREIBERG

It's starting to look like Rorschach was right after all.

VEIDT

I fail to see the connection. Jon left of his own free will. Rorschach was caught red-handed at the scene of a murder.

DREIBERG

The victim was shot. Rorschach's never used a gun in his life.

VEIDT

You're saying he was set-up?

DREIBERG

Bullard's been after us for years. First he got us outlawed. And now he's eliminating us.

VEIDT

Daniel, this is paranoid.

DREIBERG

He's got something planned, Adrian, a takeover of some kind. And he's getting rid of us before we can stop him.

MISS WILCOX

Mr. Veidt, your next appointment is waiting.

DREIBERG

Adrian, trust me. Something big's about to happen.

VEIDT

That's right. There's about to be nuclear war, and I'm trying to stop it. -- But keep in touch, Daniel. Let me know what you find out.

Veidt pats Dreiberger on the shoulder and steps away. Dreiberger glowers under the patronizing treatment.

VEIDT

Is everything all right? Do you
need money?

DREIBERG

(cold)

No. I'm fine.

VEIDT

Good then, take care. My love
to Laurie.

Veidt heads out with Miss Wilcox and his entourage. Dreiberger's brow furrows with suspicion.

CUT TO:

INT. VEIDT TOWER LOBBY - DAY

A huge open atrium on the ground floor, with marble columns, fountains, trees -- an Egyptian pleasure garden. Dreiberger speaks at a pay phone, highly animated.

DREIBERG

Did you speak to him? Did you tell
him you were staying with me?
Because he knows. He sent his
regards.

LAURIE (O.S.)

What's with you, Daniel? Are you
starting to suspect Adrian?

DREIBERG

He was so smug, so condescen-
ding...Here he comes now, the
darling of the media.

He turns to watch as Veidt and Miss Wilcox descend an escalator into the lobby. NEWS CREWS lie in wait for him at the bottom.

REPORTER

Mr. Veidt! Is there going to be
a war?

VEIDT

Not if I can help it.

He tries to push past the cameras.

REPORTER

Can you give us a comment about
Rorschach?

VEIDT
No one is above the law.

Wide-eyed, Veidt stops in his tracks. An ARMED GUNMAN has stepped out from behind a pillar, directly into his path.

ASSASSIN
VEIDT!

Veidt dives. The Assassin's Bullet catches Miss Wilcox in the gut. Veidt rolls to the right, dodging another bullet, and comes up with a free-standing BRASS ASHTRAY in his hands.

He swings it into the Assassin's ribs, knocking him backwards into a FOUNTAIN. The GUN skitters off across the marble floor.

As the SECURITY STAFF races up, Veidt charges into the fountain and slams the dazed Assassin's head into a decorative bust of King Tut.

Arms flying, the two men grapple. The Assassin looks familiar. It's that strapping farm boy, Harley, from Happy Harry's Bar.

VEIDT
Who sent you? Tell me!

SECURITY GUARD
Stand back, Mr. Veidt! We'll handle it!

VEIDT
He's got a poison capsule!

Veidt grabs hold of Harley's hair and thrusts a hand into his mouth.

VEIDT
Don't bite down! Don't bite...

Harley gags.

VEIDT
Who sent you, goddamit? -- Who's behind this?

Harley goes limp. Frustrated, Veidt releases his lifeless body, which splashes into the water.

Veidt slogs out of the fountain, shaken and breathless. He examines Miss Wilcox, who is dead.

AT THE PAY PHONE

Dreiberg is almost as shaken as Veidt.

DREIBERG
Oh my god, oh my god...

LAURIE
Daniel, what is it?

DREIBERG
Adrian...Someone just tried to
kill him.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON MESS HALL - NIGHT

CONVICTS lined up with metal trays at a long cafeteria-style serving area. Everyone in prison greys. Rorschach waits his turn.

A tall prisoner ambles over and looks Rorschach up and down. We see that his face and entire body have been tattooed with ZEBRA markings. He is accompanied by THREE HULKING CONVICTS, TOM, DICK, AND HARRY.

ZEBRA
That you, Rorschach? You're even uglier without the mask.

Rorschach glances at him, then stares straight ahead.

RORSCHACH
You look older. Eighteen years.

ZEBRA
At least I'm alive. Cortex and those Brain Trust guys checked into the infirmary and never came back. I guess they was really desperate to get out of here.

Zebra chuckles, but Rorschach stares at him like he's said something profound.

ZEBRA
Anyway, now I run the joint.

Zebra turns to the INMATES in line behind Rorschach.

ZEBRA
Fellas, you don't mind if some of my boys cut in, do ya? They're feelin' kinda hungry today.

INMATE
(intimidated)
No, Zebra, go ahead.

The Three Convicts slip into line behind Rorschach.

ZEBRA

Enjoy your dinner, boys. You too,
Rorschach.

A LACKEY hands Zebra a dinner tray, piled high with food, and he walks off.

TOM

Rorschach, you're real famous, man. I'd sure like to get your autograph.

Rorschach's face shows no emotion. He moves forward in the line. A SERVER drops a gristly chunk of meat on his tin plate.

TOM

I got my special autograph pen right here.

Tom reaches into his pocket and withdraws an ICEPICK.

TOM

Notched up some big names over the years.

Suddenly Rorschach spins, catching Tom's head with the edge of his dinner tray. The icepick clatters to the floor. Tom follows.

Dick and Harry are on him in an instant, pinning him against the serving counter. Instead of resisting, Rorschach vaults backward. He brings a knee up into Moe's chin, grabs a fistful of Harry's hair, and tumbles back OVER THE COUNTER -- dragging Harry's head, face down, into a steam tray full of bubbling SOUP.

Landing on his feet, keeping his grip on Harry's hair, Rorschach uses his free hand to bury a FORK in the Server, who's about to stab him with a carving knife.

Dick lunges at him across the counter. Rorschach grabs a VAT off a nearby burner and, with a single sweep of the arm, DOUSES BOTH CONVICTS WITH HOT COOKING FAT.

All this has taken five seconds maximum. WHISTLES shriek as the two disfigured Convicts writhe on the floor. CAFETERIA WORKERS clear a path as PRISON GUARDS rush in with billy clubs drawn.

Rorschach calmly stares at Zebra as the Guards haul him away.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Long and Rorschach have changed rooms. The new room -- two chairs, a square table -- is identical to the first, except for the CHAIN LINK FENCE which spans its width, separating doctor from patient.

DR. LONG

Walter, I thought we'd try some more blot tests. How about taking a look at this one for me?

Through a narrow opening in the wire screen, Dr. Long slides a card across the table. Rorschach turns it over and glances at it.

RORSCHACH

Seen it before.

DR. LONG

I know. But this time, tell me what you really see.

Rorschach leans forward, half-warning, half-challenge.

RORSCHACH

Sure you want to know, Doctor? Once a man sees, he can never go back.

DR. LONG

Tell me what you see.

Rorschach stares at Dr. Long, then obligingly looks down at the card.

RORSCHACH

Dog.

Dr. Long scowls.

RORSCHACH

With head split in half.

DR. LONG

And what - split - the dog's head in half?

RORSCHACH

I did.

A beat.

DR. LONG

Walter, why would you want to kill a dog?

Rorschach drifts into memory.

RORSCHACH

One night I opened my eyes. Saw
the world.

EXT. WAREHOUSE DISTRICT - DUSK (FLASHBACK)

NIGHT FALLS on ruined buildings with broken windows and crumbling walls. The streets are empty, silent except for the distant sound of dogs BARKING. Rorschach's narration continues over scene.

RORSCHACH (V.O.)

'75. Kidnap case, little Dupont girl. Weeks dragged by. No word. Thought of little child, alone, frightened... Decided to investigate. Personal reasons.

The lone figure of red-haired Walter Kovacs (pre-Rorschach, without a mask) emerges from the shadows and turns up his collar. He strides deliberately down the sidewalk past a ramshackle wooden storm fence covered with obscene graffiti.

RORSCHACH

Spread money around. Got a tip.
Abandoned dress factory in
Brooklyn.

He peers through a broken slat in the fence. In a side yard, TWO LARGE GERMAN SHEPHERDS viciously fight over an unseen object.

INT. DRESS FACTORY - DUSK (FLASHBACK)

A door swings open, and Rorschach enters. He pockets a metal file, flicks on a flashlight.

Mannequins, decrepit sewing machines, rolls of rotting fabric. Rorschach crouches beside a pot-bellied stove, sticks a hand inside, and sifts through the ashes. He pulls out a charred scrap of FABRIC from a child's pajamas, decorated with balloons and teddy bears.

He stands. On the counter is a big wooden CHOPPING BLOCK. Rorschach opens the cupboard above. It contains a cleaver, a bone saw, an assortment of butcher knives. He stands there a moment, then, hearing BARKING, moves to a WINDOW.

RORSCHACH'S POV: THE YARD OUTSIDE

The German Shepherds romp in the dying light. We CLOSE IN ON the dogs until we see what it is they're tussling over: a BIG BLOODY KNOB OF BONE.

RORSCHACH (V.O.)
That's when I knew where the
little girl had gone. -- Decided
to wait for owner...

INT. FACTORY - ENTRY - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Keys in the lock. A moment later, the door swings wide.
A FAT MAN enters and whistles to the dogs.

FAT MAN
Here, boys. Dinnerti...

Rorschach steps out of the shadows and BASHES HIM OVER THE HEAD.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Rorschach leans back in his chair, taking a break in his story. Finally, Dr. Long, dreading the reply, asks...

DR. LONG
Then what happened?

RORSCHACH
Went to butcher shop. Had to
break in.

INT. FACTORY - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The Fat Man squirms on the floor, a gag in his mouth. He's handcuffed to a pipe. Rorschach strides into frame with a GROCERY SACK.

He kneels beside the Fat Man, peels off his glove, and reaches into the sack. He yanks away the Fat Man's gag.

FAT MAN
What -- what are you d...

Rorschach silences the Fat Man by cramming a fistful of RAW HAMBURGER into his open mouth. He's got several pounds of the stuff, and he spends the next few seconds smearing it all over the Fat Man's face, throat, and hands. stuffing the leftovers down his shirt. When he's done, he reaches into the sack for a big plastic bag full of STEER BLOOD...and empties it over the Fat Man's head.

FRANTIC SCRATCHING from outside. Rorschach strolls over to the door and, as the Fat Man wriggles in helpless terror, lets the dogs inside.

Then he stands back and enjoys the carnage.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Dr. Long listens, agog, as Rorschach wraps things up.

RCRSCHACK

When they finished eating, picked up a cleaver, split their skulls.

Rorschach leans forward.

RCRSCHACK

Where was God, Doctor? God didn't strike down the killer. Or the dogs. Or me. If God saw what happened to the little girl, he didn't seem to mind. Maybe he got off on it.

DR. LONG

That was the first, the first time you...?

RORSCHACK

Saw the world. Random, empty, hideous.

SLOW PAN DOWN TO CLOSE-UP ON INKBLOT.

RORSCHACK

No pattern except what we imagine. No right and wrong, Doctor, like you said. What we make of it.

ON RORSCHACK

He slides the inkblot back to Dr. Long through the slot.

RORSCHACK

Now do you see?

ON DR. LONG

He's a different man. Unfortunately, he sees.

CUT TO:

INT. DREIBERG'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Laurie kisses Dan's face, his neck, his mouth, but he just stands there, frozen with anxiety. They are both naked. It feels like a DREAM.

She strokes his forehead. Then, with an enigmatic look, she grabs a fistful of hair in each hand and pulls firmly.

His scalp tears open. She peels away his face...revealing not a bloody skull, but his NIGHT OWL MASK.

Laurie yanks the skin from his neck, shoulders, chest. Under his nakedness is his true skin, his Night Owl costume.

Night Owl now stands tall, powerful, confident. He kisses Laurie and runs his hands over her bare shoulders. He grips her collarbone. She is afraid and tries to stop him. Over her objections, he rips the skin from her shoulders, exposing the Silk Spectre costume underneath. She SCREAMS...

INT. DREIBERG'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Laurie wakes up in a sweat on the sofa, wearing one of Dreiberger's T-shirts. The television is tuned to the news. She looks around for Daniel. He's not there.

LAURIE

Daniel?

Unnerved, she gets up and goes into the kitchen.

INT. DREIBERG'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

The only light comes from BEHIND the refrigerator. She goes over and discovers the hidden door. She shoves the fridge aside, revealing the stairway to the workshop.

Tentatively, she heads down the stairs.

INT. DREIBERG'S WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Laurie gazes in wonder at Night Owl's secret lair. She looks around for Dreiberger.

LAURIE

Dan, are you here?

She snoops around, examining the stuffed owls, gizmos, lathes, and machines. She proceeds toward the Owlship. The tarp has been pulled off. As she moves around it, she can see through the round windshields into the illuminated cabin. Dan is inside in his boxer shorts, doing some routine maintenance. He notices Laurie and signals her over.

Laurie walks under the Owlship and climbs up a retractable ladder.

INT. OWLSHIP - NIGHT

Smudged with oil, Dan sets down a wrench and helps Laurie up. Some panels have been removed, revealing the complicated workings of the airship.

DREIBERG

I couldn't sleep.

LAURIE

Me, neither.

They smile at each, then she gazes around the Owlship.

LAURIE

Wow, this brings back memories.
Does it still fly?

DREIBERG

I took her out a couple of summers
back. Scared the hell out of some
cows.

He tests the electrical system. She starts exploring.

DREIBERG

I've always kept her working in
case, I don't know, they invited
us to the Rose Bowl Parade or
something.

Behind him, Laurie lets out a little SQUEAL of delight.
She's just opened a compartment door. Inside it are a
handful of COSTUMES -- their old Watchmen togs.

LAURIE

Dan! The spare costumes! I can't
believe you kept them.

DREIBERG

Me, neither. -- How did we ever
have the nerve to wear those
things in public? -- Why did I ever
want to?

Laurie's holding her old costume against her shoulders,
eyeing herself in a small mirror above a sink.

LAURIE

Turn around.

DREIBERG

You're not going to...

LAURIE

Don't look. Turn around.

Smirking, he complies. Laurie begins to undress in the
back of the cabin.

DREIBERG

I was so naive when I started out.
I thought everybody was in the
game to do good. Then to learn
that all these paragons of virtue
were really in it for the sex,
or the money, or had weird
political leanings...

LAURIE

Okay, you can look.

Dreiberger turns around. Laurie's in full costume, looking quite imposing and, in a perverse way, quite beautiful. He's stares at her, breathless.

DREIBERG
Silk Spectre...

She swaggers toward him, playing the part.

LAURIE
Now, you put on yours.

DREIBERG
You must be joking.

LAURIE
We're going for a ride.

She backs him up.

DREIBERG
We can't just...

LAURIE
It's radar invisible, right?

DREIBERG
Yeah, but we could still...

LAURIE
Then get dressed.

He's up against a wall.

LAURIE
Or do I have to get tough with
you?

She's right in his face, threatening, serious, strong.
He smiles, kind of embarrassed.

DREIBERG
Okay, okay, I'll change.

Dreiberger reaches for his costume. Behind his back, Laurie smiles slyly.

MONTAGE: PUTTING ON THE NIGHT OWL COSTUME

Elastic pulled tight over flesh. Gloves snapped on. Equipment belt. Struggle to fasten equipment belt over enlarged belly. Weapons inserted into belt. Goggles. Armored wings. The shadow of the cowl lowered over the silhouette of his head. Boots. Pan up. Night Owl stands before us in all his glory.

DREIBERG
Let's boogie.

MONTAGE ENDS as Dreiberger sits in the driver's seat and starts the ignition. It turns over a few times but won't catch. He glances at Silk Spectre and tries again. Still not catching. How embarrassing.

Dreiberger desperately wills the engine to catch. Thank God it does. He looks proudly at Silk Spectre and guns the engine, which ROARS like a dragon.

INT. OWL CAVE - NIGHT

The Owlship breathes fire from its dual exhausts. The Cave fills with smoke. The Owlship rises off the ground. Slowly, steadily, it floats toward the abandoned subway tunnel.

INT. OWLSHIP - NIGHT

Laurie stands behind Dreiberger as he checks his controls. They glide through the subway tunnel toward a set of giant iron doors.

DREIBERG

Flamethrowers, functioning. Water cannon, functioning. Four channel digital stereo...

Billie Holliday comes over the speakers, singing "You're My Thrill."

DREIBERG

Functioning. Air to air missiles, functioning.

The doors slide open, and the Owlship glides through.

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Clouds of fog cover the top of the warehouse and billow over the sides. The Owlship rises out of the mist, silhouetted against the full moon.

EXT. AERIAL SHOT - MANHATTAN - NIGHT

Looking straight down on the Owlship from above as it floats over the city.

INT. OWLSHIP - NIGHT

Dreiberger and Laurie take a lazy cruise around New York City, passing neon advertising dirigibles. "You're My Thrill" continues through the sequence.

DREIBERG

God, this feels great. Being above it all. Being ourselves.

LAURIE

Down there, Daniel...what's that?

On the ground, TEN THOUSAND POINTS OF LIGHT flicker in a meadow in CENTRAL PARK.

DREIBERG

Let's get some cameras on it.

He flips switches and manipulates a joystick. Images appear on SEVERAL VIDEO MONITORS.

VIDEO MONITORS

A low-light OWLVISION image of a large crowd of people holding candles. Camera zooms, pans, focuses.

LAURIE

It's some kind of vigil.

Dreiberg adjusts another camera, and we see on a different monitor that some people are carrying signs, "COME HOME, DR. MANHATTAN," "PLEASE FORGIVE US," "WE REPENT," "ONE MORE CHANCE," "SAVE US."

DREIBERG

It's for Jon. They want him to come back.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - NIGHT

A MINISTER addresses to the crowd.

MINISTER

As Jesus hung upon the cross, he cried out "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" "My God, My God, why has thou forsaken me?" And we call out to you, Dr. Manhattan, why have you forsaken us? Why have you abandoned us in our hour of need?

INT. OWLSHIP - NIGHT

Laurie, concerned, taps on the screen of a monitor with a multi-color image.

LAURIE

Daniel, what's this?

DREIBERG

Infra-red.

INFRA-RED MONITOR

HEAT VISION shows figures lurking outside the meadow in the trees. Dreiberger switches to NIGHT VISION. We see that GANGS OF TOPKNOTS are brandishing CLUBS.

LAURIE

They're going to attack the crowd.

Dreiberger turns a switch and the CTU POLICE RADIO BAND pre-empts Billie Holiday on the speakers.

CTU UNIT (RADIO)

Seeking to confirm orders, HQ.
You said "do not interfere with
Topknobs"? Is that correct? Over.

CTU COMMAND (RADIO)

That's right, one four three. Make
no arrests. Orders from the top.
Over.

On the MONITOR, the Topknobs are chomping at the bit.

DREIBERG

Jesus, Bullard's orchestrating
this whole thing. He wants civil
unrest so he can declare martial
law.

LAURIE

Did you get it on tape? We can
expose him.

DREIBERG

I'm out of tape, but that's not
the point. Innocent people are
about to get their skulls cracked.

She recognizes that righteous tone in his voice.

LAURIE

Daniel, we just came out for a
ride.

THE TOPKNOTS

charge from the trees like screaming savages.

INT. OWLSHIP

Dreiberger watches in horror.

LAURIE

There's nothing we can do.

DREIBERG

We can't just stand by.

LAURIE

I hate this as much as you do,
but....

Dreiberg throws the Owlship into a dive.

LAURIE

What are you doing? You'll land
us in jail.

THE OWLSHIP

streaks down toward the meadow as the Topknots swarm closer
to the peaceful crowd.

DREIBERG

presses a button.

DREIBERG

I'm sorry, Laurie. We don't have
a choice.

She looks away in frustration.

YELLOW TEAR GAS

spews from one side of the Owlship.

THE OWLSHIP

flies between the Topknots and the crowd, immersing the
hooligans in a YELLOW CLOUD.

ON THE GROUND

Topknots start coughing and slowing down. The Owlship
keeps circling. Topknots gag, choke, fall to their knees,
cover their eyes, wretch.

INT. OWLSHIP

Laurie pounds on Dreiber's shoulders.

LAURIE

It's working! Ha! We got 'em!

CTU COMMAND (RADIO)

What's going on here? Who attacked
the Topknots?

CTU UNIT (RADIO)

Wasn't us, HQ. We have visual
ID on unidentified aircraft.

CTU COMMAND (RADIO)

Doesn't show up on our radar.

LAURIE

Oh shit, let's get out of here.

Dreiberg banks the Owlship, and a CTU helicopter comes into view through the windshield, hovering right in front of them.

CTU UNIT (RADIO)

Well, I'm looking right at it.

LAURIE

We are totally fucked.

CTU COMMAND (RADIO)

Air units intercept aircraft.

Use maximum force if necessary.

Dreiberg whips the Owlship in the opposite direction. Another CTU HELICOPTER rotors into position, it's gun turrets taking aim.

LAURIE

Goddamnit! I told you not to get involved!

The Helicopters open fire with their machine guns. Bullets clang against the hull.

AERIAL SHOT - MEADOW

The armor-piercing bullets bounce off the superhard shell of the Owlship, which banks wildly and tears off, pursued by the three helicopters.

INT. OWLSHIP

Laurie, still standing, clings tightly to Dreiberg's seat.

LAURIE

They're practically on us.

DREIBERG

That Detroit shit. I'm so worried.

He punches a button on the dash. It's labelled, "TURBO."

Nothing happens. Oh shit. He tries again. No luck. Laurie rolls her eyes.

DREIBERG

I'm sorry, it's been ten years!

AERIAL SHOT - OVER MANHATTAN

The CTU helicopters aim air-to-air rockets at the Owlship. They fire.

INT. OWLSHIP

Dreiberg flips a few toggles and tries the Turbo again.

AERIAL SHOT - OVER MANHATTAN

The turbojets kick in, and the Owlship loops away from the rockets, which explode in the distance.

The Owlship accelerates to 400 mph, rising almost straight up. The CTU craft are left in the dust.

The Owlship rockets steeply over the skyline and disappears into the cloud cover.

INT. OWLSHIP

Laurie picks herself up from the floor as Dreiberg activates some controls.

DREIBERG

Fog blowers on.

ABOVE THE CLOUDS

The Owlship shrouds itself in DENSE CLOUDS OF BILLOWING FOG which spew from vents on all sides. A few seconds later, the CTU helicopters arrive and find only fluffy whiteness. They circle around, searching for the Owlship.

INT. OWLSHIP

Dreiberg turns off the motors. The CTU radio chatter continues.

CTU UNITS (RADIO)

I don't see 'em. You see 'em? /

I don't get a reading on radar.

/ It must've headed toward Jersey.

On the HEAT VISION MONITOR, the CTU helicopters fly away.

LAURIE

We lost 'em.

DREIBERG

Of course.

He shoots her a glib little smile, then flips the stereo back to Billie Holiday. Laurie is furious.

LAURIE

You think it's funny? They'll be looking for us now. They're gonna find us and throw us in jail.

He steps toward her.

LAURIE
I'm involved in this, too, ya
know.

He stands in front of her and pulls off his goggles.

LAURIE
You didn't listen to what I said.
You just went ahead and...

Daniel pulls Laurie to him and kisses her hungrily. He wraps her in his strong arms. After resisting for a moment, she relaxes. And reciprocates. Her hands slide down to his CRESCENT MOON BELT BUCKLE...

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

THE CRESCENT MOON

Actually a full moon, but it's partially eclipsed by a cloud in front. And nestled like an egg in that billowy cloud is the Owlship.

CUT TO:

INT. ZEBRA'S CELL BLOCK -NIGHT

BOB THE GUARD makes his rounds down the long aisle. He stops in front of Zebra's cell and stands there with his back to the bars, as if keeping watch. He whispers nervously over his shoulder.

BOB
I got the key to solitary, but
not to the cells. It's the best
I could do.

ZEBRA
Relax, Bob. We'll handle the
rest. -- Your family's gonna be
all right.

Bob looks both ways, then unlocks Zebra's cell door. Zebra slides out and pats Bob on the shoulder.

ZEBRA
Let's get the boys.

They head down the aisle.

CUT TO:

INT. OWLSHIP - NIGHT

Clouds and skyline and advertising dirigibles drift across the circular windshields. Instrument lights blink on the panel. No one's at the controls. Billie Holiday sings plaintively.

we follow a trail of discarded clothing -- only in this movie the clothes are superhero costumes. And they lead to Daniel and Laurie on the floor of the cabin, naked, intertwined, and very satisfied.

LAURIE
Better. Much better.

Dreiberg starts to say something, settles back with a serene smile instead.

LAURIE
You know what made the difference?
It was the costumes.

Dreiberg seems mildly shocked by the proposition.

DREIBERG
I'm not that much of a pervert.

LAURIE
Yes you are.

A look between them -- playful but serious.

DREIBERG
Tonight was the first time I've
felt like myself in ten years.

LAURIE
I thought it might do the trick.

DREIBERG
I feel like I'm on fire. Like
I could do anything.

LAURIE
I bet you can.

She reaches for him, but he wraps himself in his cloak and moves purposefully to the instrument panel.

LAURIE
What are you doing?

He throws a few switches, arcs the Owlship hard right.

DREIBERG
We've got to spring Rorschach.

LAURIE
...Now??

DREIBERG
We've already waited too long.

Laurie sulks as Dreiberg reaches for the throttle and kicks the ship into overdrive.

EXT. AERIAL SHOT - NIGHT

Afterburners belch flame as the Owlship accelerates and emerges from the clouds.

CUT TO:

INT. MAXIMUM SECURITY BLOCK - NIGHT

A GUARD stands in front of the GATE to SOLITARY CONFINEMENT. He sees something odd and pulls his gun. Before he can aim it, a MEAT CLEAVER flies through the air and lodges in his chest. He slumps to the floor.

Zebra and THREE FORMER SUPER-VILLAINS step out of the shadows and approach the body. The stocky one called THE BUTCHER leans down and retrieves his tool. The wiry one called ELECTRON rolls an oversized ARC WELDER. The giant-sized one called OGRE carries a long coil of electric cable.

ZEBRA

Plug it in.

Zebra unlocks the iron gate.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON - NIGHT

SEARCHLIGHTS in OBSERVATION TOWERS scan the complex with powerful beams. Guards patrol on foot.

A LOW CLOUD hovers over the prison. It floats over the SMOKESTACK.

INT. OWLSHIP - NIGHT

Dreiberg throws a lever, which opens the hatch in the floor.

LAURIE

Daniel, he's a killer. He's where he belongs.

Dreiberg steps onto an iron crossbar.

DREIBERG

He's saved our lives half a dozen times. -- Coming?

A beat, and Laurie reluctantly joins him on the bar. Dreiberg flips a switch on a REMOTE CONTROL. A winch lowers them on a cable.

INT. SMOKESTACK

Dreiberg and Laurie descend into the bowels of the prison.

LAURIE

We should never have put on these costumes.

CUT TO:

INT. RCRSCHACH'S CELL - NIGHT

Rorschach sits on his bunk, facing the side wall. The sliding panel in the SOLID IRON DOOR is thrown open, revealing Zebra's face.

ZEBRA

Rorschach, I brought you some visitors. You remember The Butcher, Electron, and Ogre? -- They remember you.

The Butcher shoves his cleaver through the panel and rattles it noisily.

THE BUTCHER

See this, runt? I'm gonna cut your puny balls off. I'm gonna chop you down to size.

INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT / REVERSE ANGLE

Ogre shoves The Butcher aside and takes his place at the panel in the door.

OGRE

Move over! I wanna see his face.

ZEBRA

Relax, boys. Everybody gets a slice of turkey. But I get to carve.

(to Ogre)
What's he doin' now?

No response from Ogre, who leans over with his face pressed tightly to the panel.

ZEBRA

You deaf? I said, what's he --

He gives Ogre a nudge. Ogre's legs buckle, and he topples onto his back. A SOUP SPOON quivers in the air, its sharpened handle buried deep in his eye socket.

ELECTRON

BOSS! JESUS!

ZEBRA

Son of a bitch!

RORSCHACH (O.S.)
Your move, Zebra.

ZEBRA
We're coming in, Rorschach: I'm
gonna fry your ass!
(to Electron)
Light the torch.

Electron ignites the arc welder and goes to work on the lock of Rorschach's cell.

INT. RORSCHACH'S CELL

Rorschach sits patiently on his bunk, staring at the wall.

CUT TO:

CW/VISION POV: HEAT-SENSING

Three MULTI-COLORED HUMAN SHAPES (GUARDS) walk down a corridor on patrol.

INT. INCINERATOR ROOM - NIGHT

Dreiberg looks through the wall with his goggles and signals Laurie to wait...wait...NOW. They slam the door open.

INT. CORRIDOR

The door swings into Guard 1, flattening him. Laurie and Dreiberg make short work of the other two. They drag the unconscious Guards into the Incinerator Room.

INT. CELL BLOCK

They stride past a row of cells. They are spotted by two Guards, who reach for their guns. Dreiberg makes a pointing movement with his arms.

SCHWEET! A MINI-TALON on monofilament wraps around the FAST GUARD'S gun and yanks it from his hand. SCHWEET! A MINI-TALON jerks the gun from the SLOW GUARD'S holster before he can reach it.

Laurie masterfully kung-fus them unconscious before Dreiberg can even get there to assist.

An INSOMNIAC PRISONER who has witnessed the whole thing rubs his eyes, sure he must be dreaming.

CUT TO:

INT. MAXIMUM SECURITY BLOCK - NIGHT

Electron shuts off the arc welder and stands back.

ELECTRON
There, it's done.

They give the door a shove. It swings inward, and GALLONS OF WATER come gushing out, soaking their feet.

ZEBRA
What the...

Zebra, Electron and The Butcher gape into the cell. They see a cracked toilet, but there's no trace of Rorschach.

ZEBRA
Rorschach...Oily oily oxen free.

THE BUTCHER
Where is the fuckin' runt?

The Butcher advances cautiously into the cell, the cleaver in his fist.

INT. RORSCHACH'S CELL

Rorschach, hiding behind the door, slams it shut on The Butcher's outstretched hand. The red-hot metal of the lock catches The Butcher's wrist. He SHRIEKS and drops the cleaver...

...giving Rorschach just enough time to snatch it up. He jumps, monkey-like, and stands poised on his bunk as the door swings wide. Zebra charges in, holding the Arc Welder which blazes loud and blue.

ZEBRA
Barbecue time, you little...!

From the bunk, Rorschach flings the cleaver. It strikes the floor, neatly severing the power cord of the arc welder...which is sitting in an inch of water.

Zebra, Electron and The Butcher do a herky-jerky dance as 20,000 VOLTS course through their bodies.

They pitch face-down into the water.

All lights in the cell-block FLICKER and DIE.

Rorschach climbs down off his bunk, picks up the cleaver, calmly steps over the dead bodies, and leaves his cell.

CUT TO:

INT. MAXIMUM SECURITY BLOCK - NIGHT

Dreiberg and Laurie approach a corner where A DOZEN GUARDS have gathered, preparing for the change of shifts. Suddenly, the lights FLICKER and DIE. It's pitch dark.

DREIBERG

Let's go.

OWLVISION POV: LOW-LIGHT ENHANCEMENT

Dreiberg leads Laurie through the Guards, who jostle each other blindly. One Guard pulls a flashlight and discovers Dreiberg and Laurie.

GUARD 4

Hey, what the...

A gloved hand grabs the flashlight and bashes the Guard on the head with it, knocking him out.

GUARD 5

You say something, Joe?

Silence, as Dreiberg and Laurie slip through the crowd and up some stairs.

CUT TO:

INT. ZEBRA'S CELL BLOCK - NIGHT

Rorschach, carrying the cleaver, paces calmly down the long corridor where the "Sickos" previously shouted out threats to him. They're all awake, ready to celebrate his death.

PRISONER

Oh shit! / What happened to Zebra?
/ Christ, he's alive! / How'd he
do it? / Guard! Come quick! /
Rorschach's escaped! He's here!

Bob the Guard rushes around a corner and almost bisects his face on the cleaver. Rorschach grabs him and takes him hostage.

CUT TO:

INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT - NIGHT

As Dreiberg and Laurie arrive, the lights go on. They notice the sea of blood and four dead bodies on the floor.

LAURIE

This had to be Rorschach's cell.

DREIBERG

Great, he's already escaped.

Laurie is about to step into the electrified water. Dreiberg sees some sparks and pulls her back at the last instant.

He unplugs the arc welder. Laurie sees a trail of bloody footprints.

LAURIE
This way.

ALARMS SOUND as they take off in pursuit of Rorschach.

CUT TO:

INT. FIVE STORY CELL BLOCK - NIGHT

The GATE to the "STACKS" is open. Bob the Guard hangs upside down, handcuffed to the bars by his ankles.

Dreiberger and Laurie run into frame, see Bob, and lock up ahead at Rorschach, walking away, slow and steady.

DREIBERG
Is that him?

LAURIE
I think so. He looks like the
guy on TV.

DREIBERG
Walks like Rorschach.

Suddenly, A DOZEN GUARDS rush into the Stacks from the other side, guns drawn, and surround Rorschach. Dreiberger and Laurie take cover in the shadows.

WARDEN
Run for it, Rorschach! Go ahead,
you can make it.

The Guards tug at their triggers. Rorschach doesn't move a muscle. The Warden is disappointed.

WARDEN
Lie face down on the floor, hands
behind your head.

Rorschach obediently sinks to his knees.

DREIBERG AND LAURIE

lock around for a strategy. It seems hopeless.

DREIBERG
We need a way to distract them.

LAURIE
(grimacing)
I have an idea.

ON RORSCHACH

Two Guards approach him with a weird ROPE-DEVICE which they hope will allow them to restrain Rorschach without getting within his striking distance.

WARDEN

When the Guards approach you,
wriggle inside without moving your
hands.

LAURIE (O.S.)

Uh, excuse me gentlemen...

All the guards turn and look at Laurie. She stands there,
topless

LAURIE

I made a wrong turn somewhere,
and I think I'm lost.

As the Guards stare at her, momentarily frozen, Dreiber --
now up on the second tier -- dashes GLASS BULBS ON THE
FLOOR around Rorschach.

In an instant, the room is filled with THICK BLACK SMOKE.

OWLVISION -- INFRARED POV

Rorschach rolls away. Dreiber leaps down from his perch
and lands beside him.

DREIBERG

It's me, Rorschach -- Daniel.

Dreiber leads Rorschach through the inky darkness. They
meet up with Laurie and flee into a stairwell.

INT. STAIRWELL

Dreiber and Laurie rush up the stairs two or three at a
time. Rorschach steps forward at his usual measured pace.

RORSCHACH

Expected you days ago. What kept
you?

LAURIE

Why, you in a hurry or somethin'?

Guards now pour into the staircase after them.

Dreiber pulls GLASS BALLS from his belt and smashes them
to the floor behind him. BOOM! The Glass Bulbs explode with
huge force, collapsing the staircase beneath them. The
Guards are trapped below. And our heroes can only go up.

ON GUARDS

Warden speaks on a WALKIE-TALKIE.

WARDEN

Get ready on rooftop. Escapees
coming your way.

EXT. PRISON ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Numerous GUARDS surround the stairway exit, rifles aimed. Other Guards cover the exit from their towers.

INT. TOP OF STAIRCASE

Four flights up, they come to a metal door, marked ROOFTOP. Laurie prepares to barrel through. Dreiberger restrains her.

DREIBERG

Wait.

OWLVISION -- INFRARED POV

Many warm bodies lie in wait on the rooftop.

BACK TO SCENE

Dreiberger pulls out his remote control and presses a switch.

EXT. ABOVE THE PRISON

The Owlship descends out of a cloud.

INT. STAIRCASE .

Guards open the door at a collapsed landing and start shooting up at them. There's no place to hide. ~

Dreiberger dramatically spreads his WINGS around his partners like an owl protecting its young. The bullets hit the wings and bounce off.

DREIBERG

Laurie, get the silencers, belt compartment C.

With Dreiberger's arms outspread, Laurie retrieves what look like COLLAPSIBLE EARMUFFS. She and Rorschach put them on.

DREIBERG

Lower the flaps on my cowl.

Laurie folds the flaps over his ears.

Dreiberger flips a switch on the remote control in his hand.

EXT. PRISON ROOFTOP - NIGHT

As the Guards wait impatiently for the Watchmen to appear, the Owlship descends over their heads. CLAXONS on the hull emit a SCREECH of such excruciating intensity that the Guards drop their weapons, cover their ears and fall to the ground, incapacitated.

INT. STAIRCASE

Dreiberg, Laurie, and Rorschach charge onto the rooftop.

EXT. ROOFTOP

The Guards see them, try to pick up their weapons, but are forced to protect their ears with their hands and arms.

The Owlship drops down along the side of the prison so that its top deck is level with the rooftop.

A DEAF GUARD

switches off his HEARING AID and achieves instant relief. He grabs his rifle and shoots at the Owlship's CLAXONS.

DREIBERG

takes a running leap off the rooftop and lands on the top deck. He opens the hatch.

THE DEAF GUARD

scores hits on the sirens. Sudden SILENCE.

LAURIE AND RORSCHACH

leap onto the top of the Owlship.

ALL THE GUARDS

grab their guns, get to their feet, and start firing.

LAURIE, RORSCHACH, AND DREIBERG

climb below deck as bullets clank whiz around them and clank against the hull. Bullets ricochet off the hatch as Rorschach pulls it shut.

INT. OWLSHIP

Dreiberg runs to the controls.

EXT. PRISON ROOFTOP

Powerful searchlights focus on the Owlship as it rises up and flies away.

INT. OWLSHIP - NIGHT

Dreiberg pilots the vessel as they streak out of danger. Once safely away, Laurie, exhilarated, throws her arms around Daniel and whoops with joy.

LAURIE

We did it! I can't believe it! You were great!

DREIBERG
I don't believe this.

LAURIE
You fucking ingrate! We risk our lives to bust you out of that hellhole, and you've got the nerve to accuse us of...

DREIBERG
Look, it's a moot point. Bullard's behind everything.

RORSCHACH
No, the Brain Trust. Faked their deaths in prison. Still alive.

Rorschach pulls the belt of his trenchcoat tight.

RORSCHACH
Comedian was investigating. Moloch told me.

DREIBERG
Moloch?

RORSCHACH
Bullard got him out of prison. He worked for CTU.

DREIBERG
Then Bullard got the Brain Trust out, too.

A pause as they try to make sense of it all. Dreiberger activates the cellular phone and punches in a number.

DREIBERG
I'm calling Adrian. He should be in on this.

LAURIE
I still don't buy this conspiracy bullshit. What's the connection to Jon? Nobody made him leave.

RORSCHACH
Find Comedian's killer and we'll know.

Dreiberger puts the call on the speakerphone.

VEIDT (V.O.)
Sorry I'm not here to take your call. I've gone down to Karnak to meditate for peace. Good luck to us all. (Beep)

The Watchmen look at each other with a sense of dread.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANTARCTICA - NIGHT

The last rays of sunlight bleed across the endless frozen plains of pristine white. A private AIRCRAFT descends toward an incongruous strip of black alongside a hypermodern winter palace. This is Karnak, Veidt's Antarctic retreat.

INT. KARNAK - NIGHT

A fur-clad figure enters in a flurry of SNOW, followed by Bubastis, his genetically engineered Lynx, on the end of a leash.

Veidt presses buttons on the wall. The fully-automated palace seals off and lights up.

The entry hall is vast and lavish, appointed in the same Egyptian style as his urban pyramid.

Veidt takes a steaming cup of cocoa that is waiting for him and walks through his palace with Bubastis.

VEIDT

Come on, Baby. Let's check up
on the world.

CUT TO:

EXT. AERIAL SHOT / DREIBERG'S NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Looking straight down as the Owlship descends toward the warehouse entrance to Dreiberger's underground lair.

INT. OWLSHIP - NIGHT

Rorschach sits in the co-pilot seat as Dreiberger guides them to a landing. Laurie yawns.

LAURIE

I can't wait to take a nice hot
bath and sleep all day.

RORSCHACH

What's that?

He points to the video screen.

Dreiberger punches up a series of PROGRESSIVE MAGNIFICATIONS, gradually zeroing in on his house. Police cars are parked up and down the street, which has been cordoned off.

DREIBERG
They've got my building
surrounded.

Dreiberg and Laurie look at each other with both empathy and blame.

DREIBERG
Well, so much for Dan Dreiberg,
ordinary citizen.

RORSCHACH
Better this way.

LAURIE
Our lives are ruined, you lunatic!
We're stuck being Watchmen!

RORSCHACH
(taps video screen)
Zoom in. What's that?

He points to a spot on the screen.

CUT TO:

EXT. DREIBERG'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Bullard walks out of the house, issuing commands to Adamson.

BULLARD
I'll command from out here. Get
everybody else out of sight.

Adamson relays the orders. Bullard paces as all evidence of a CTU presence evaporates.

Above Bullard, a strange device lowers into frame with two high-tech GRAPPLING HOOKS shaped like the TALONS OF AN OWL. Adamson sees it and calls out.

COP
Chief, watch out!

Just as Bullard is alerted, the grappling hooks close around his shoulders and lift him off the ground.

Struggling, he is reeled up into the sky on a cable.

He looks up and sees the bottom of the Owlship two hundred feet above.

The Owlship flies away with Bullard dangling below.

CTU Units take aim but dare not fire.

INT. OWLSHIP - NIGHT

The bottom hatch of the airship opens, and Bullard is pulled up into a metal cage. The hatch closes beneath his feet. The talons release. Bullard fearfully looks up into the masked faces of the Watchmen. His eyes flit between them, seeking the weak link. They come to rest on Night Owl.

BULLARD

(summoning courage)

Might as well remove the mask
Daniel. Now that I know who you
are.

Drieberg reaches up and deliberately removes his mask. He faces his adversary of 15 years for the first time.

DRIEBERG

You're not in any position to say
anything. Not this time Bullard.

Bullard nervously beseeches Laurie.

BULLARD

Laurie . . . You can't be mixed
up in this again . . . If you want
we'll cut the same deal as before.

Daniel's temper flares. Rorschach stares.

LAURIE

And work for you? You took away
our lives, Bullard.

DRIEBERG

No deals to be made. We're not
hiding any more.

RORSCHACH

Wasting time. Ask questions.

Rorschach reaches between the bars, gripping Bullard's little finger. Bullard's eyes widen in recognition of Rorschach's trademark. He tries to pull his hand away, Rorschach's grip is too strong.

BULLARD

(nervously)

Now, this isn't necessary.

RORSCHACH

Kick in face not necessary. Broken
finger essential to retrieve
correct information.

(Rorschach bends back
Bullard's finger.)

Why did you kill the Comedian?

BULLARD

I didn't.

Laurie throws a lever, the hatch swings open beneath Bullard's feet. Bullard shrieks, grabbing the bars, stopping his fall. His legs dangle helplessly over a howling void. Wind whips through the hull.

RORSCHACH

Where's the Brain Trust? You got them out of prison.

BULLARD

Agh! I didn't get anybody out of prison.

Rorschach bends back Bullard's finger. Snapping it.

RORSCHACH

What about Moloch?

BULLARD

(near tears)

Yeah, I got him out; years ago. Just him, that's all.

Rorschach SNIFFS noisily.

RORSCHACH

You killed him to set me up.

BULLARD

(screaming)

NO! I got a tip you'd be at his place. Anonymous call. Same as tonight. Same voice. - - Laurie . . . please, tell him. I don't know what's going on!!

LAURIE

Drop him.

Rorschach sniffs hard. Sniffs again. Doesn't act.

DRIEBERG

What is it?

Rorschach pulls back the hatch lever. The trapdoor closes under Bullard's feet. He drops to his knees.

RORSCHACH

He's telling the truth.

Laurie and Drieberg are stunned.

CUT TO:

EXT. RADIO TRANSMITTING ANTENNA - NIGHT

High in the air, Bullard clings desperately to a spindly vertical rod. His arms and legs are wrapped around the needle like an orangutan stranded up a tree.

The Owlship hovers just out of reach. Dreiber, Laurie, and Rorschach stand in the gangway.

DREIBERG
DON'T ABUSE CITIZENS.

RORSCHACH
We'll be watching.

LAURIE
I'd a' dropped ya.

The Owlship pulls away, and we see that Bullard is stranded atop the EMPIRE STATE BUILDING like a baby King Kong.

CUT TO:

INT. NEPENTHE REST HOME - MORNING

Sally sits in bed, painting her toenails, watching the news on TV about Silk Spectre and Night Owl rescuing Rorschach from prison. The phone rings.

SALLY
Hello. -- Who? -- Oh my god, Hollis! It's been years. -- I'm watching it now. Some good news for a change. -- Living together, you're kidding? A week after Jon splits? Jesus, fast work. The girl takes after her Mom.

INT. HOLLIS MASON'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Hollis looks at an old photo of the first generation Watchmen.

HOLLIS
Can I tell you something, Sal? Pretty as Laurie is, personally, I always thought you were better looking.

INTERCUT BOTH LOCATIONS

Sally stops painting her nails and smiles.

SALLY
Hollis, you dear boy, you used to be so honest.

HOLLIS
Still am. Just not as shy.

She leans back in bed and lights a cigarette.

SALLY
Funny thing is, Laurie always
hated this adventure stuff. Never
forgave me for pushing her into
it in the first place.

HOLLIS
You wait and see. One day she'll
thank you.

SALLY
Well she better hurry up. The
future's getting pretty damn
short.

HOLLIS
Damn, it's good talking to you,
Sally. From your voice, you're
sounding younger than ever.

SALLY
You too, Hollis. Ya been keepin'
in shape?

CUT TO:

INT. KARNAK / INFORMATION CENTER - NIGHT

Veidt walks into a cavernous room with a WALL OF VIDEO MONITORS like in his office in New York. A long wood table stretches in front. A high-backed EXECUTIVE CHAIR sits in the middle, facing the monitors. It is the only chair in the room. A complex REMOTE CONTROL KEYPAD is mounted in the armrest.

Veidt walks over and turns on all 200 monitors.

ANGLE ON VIDEO WALL

Transmissions from many countries in many languages.
Beneath each screen is a label of the city of origin. We
settle on a screen marked SYDNEY.

NEWSCASTER
Both India and China have fired
missiles, but so far only with
conventional warheads.

Veidt's gaze drifts several screens to the right, to the
monitor labelled NEW DELHI. On the wall behind the
NEWSCASTER is a civil defense logo.

INDIAN NEWSCASTER

-- best situated in a cellar room, as far away from windows as possible. Cinderblock walls are preferred, but a makeshift shelter can be constructed of...

Veidt's gaze drifts to WASHINGTON, D.C.

NEWSCASTER

-- amid rumors that top-ranking officials and military personnel have already been relocated to underground bunkers.

DAN RATHER

Troops are massing on borders around the globe, between Russia and China, India and Pakistan, Israel and all her neighbors, North and South Korea, Iraq and Kuwait, between Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia, between Armenia and Azerbaijan -- to name just a few. Since the departure of Dr. Manhattan, the whole world has erupted into an enormous land grab.

Closed-circuit monitors are on the bottom row -- exterior views of Karnak as seen by surveillance cameras. A RADAR SCREEN which shows no activity; the skies are clear.

And finally, a screen showing A LARGE SATELLITE in orbit, emblazoned with the Veidt Industries logo.

CUT TO:

EXT. STATUE OF LIBERTY - DAY

Lady Liberty stands in the foreground, surrounded by scaffolding. She is in the midst of being reconstructed. Downtown Manhattan is visible in the background.

CAMERA cranes down and SUBMERGES under the water. Down, down, down we go into the murky sea...until we discover the Owlship floating a few feet off the garbage-strewn bottom. A yellow glow illuminates the windshields from inside.

INT. OWLSHIP UNDERWATER - DAY

Laurie is caught up watching the news. Dreiberg conducts research at his computer. Rorschach paces restlessly. All of them are extremely tense.

RORSCHACH

Computer unnecessary. Give me
smallest finger on man's hand,
I'll produce information.

(a beat)

It's dark enough. Let's find our
killers before they find us.

DREIBERG

You're missing the point. They're
not out to get us. We're just
in their way.

Dreiberger completes a flow chart of clues and evidence.

DREIBERG

Look, it starts when the Comedian
learns about the Brain Trust being
alive. Then you picked up the
scent, and Moloch snitched on you,
too.

RORSCHACH

Attempt to kill Veidt, explain
that.

DREIBERG

I'm still working on it.

Dreiberger opens the old newspaper with the news of the
attempt on Veidt's life. Rorschach snatches it away.

RORSCHACH

So trace assassin. Visit bars.
Squeeze people.

They are near to blows when Laurie shouts at them.

LAURIE

How can you stand there arguing
about some imaginary plot while
the whole world is going to war?

DREIBERG

It's all related, Laurie.

Laurie's wall of denial finally crumbles. She sags and
closes her eyes.

LAURIE

God, what have I done?

DREIBERG

It's not your fault.

Dreiberger goes over and comforts her. Rorschach sighs
impatiently and opens the newspaper. Finally, he sees the
photo of Veidt's would-be assassin, Harley.

LAURIE
(despairing)
I just wish Jon would come back.
Make it like it was before.

Dreiberg's face drops. His hands slip from Laurie's shoulders.

Rorschach approaches him, jabbing a finger at the photo of Harley.

RORSCHACH
I know him.

DREIBERG
Big fucking deal.

Dreiberg trudges past him, rejected. Laurie sits crouched forward, holding her head in her hands.

RORSCHACH
Can't let personal emotion
interfere with work. First rule.

LAURIE
What do you know about emotion,
you zombie?

A BLUE HAND rests on Laurie's shoulder.

DR. MANHATTAN
It's okay, Laurie. I'm here.

Dr. Manhattan stands behind her. Naturally, everyone is startled.

LAURIE
Jon! You're back.

DR. MANHATTAN
You called for me.

LAURIE
Do you know what's happened since
you left? The world's failing
apart.

DR. MANHATTAN
I've decided not to interfere.

LAURIE
Jon, you've got to.

DR. MANHATTAN
You don't separate warring
colonies of ants, do you? Try to
see it from my perspective.

LAURIE
I can't, Jon. I'm only human.

DR. MANHATTAN
Then I'll show you. Come with me.

Dr. Manhattan takes Laurie's hand.

DREIBERG
Laurie, don't go.

Dr. Manhattan faces him like a jealous lover.

DR. MANHATTAN
Stay out of this, Dreiberger.

Laurie steps between them.

LAURIE
I better do what he says, Dan.

Dreiberger searches for a clue to her true feelings. A blue glow surrounds her.

DREIBERG
Laurie, no!

Zzhhhp! She and Dr. Manhattan are gone in a blue flash.

Dreiberger stares, heartsick, at the empty space where Laurie stood.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MOON - DAY

A BLUE SLIT opens in the sky, mere inches above the lunar surface. Dr. Manhattan steps placidly through, and a moment later Laurie follows. As he saunters forward, Laurie holds her throat and GASPS for air.

DR. MANHATTAN
It's lovely here, isn't it Laurie?
I can't believe I never brought
you here before.

In her panic, Laurie loses her footing and tumbles down a slope. Dr. Manhattan finally turns and sees her predicament.

She rolls to the bottom of the hill and stops at the feet of Dr. Manhattan, who has apparently teleported himself there to meet her. He extends a finger and surrounds her with a thin AURA of pressurized air. She sucks in the precious oxygen.

DR. MANHATTAN

Laurie, I'm sorry; I completely forgot about the air. Are you all right?

LAURIE

(panting)

You stupid bastard! Don't you ever think about anybody but yourself?

DR. MANHATTAN

Let's not argue, okay. I said I was sorry.

She rolls her eyes: Typical. Gets to her feet, irritated.

LAURIE

What did you want to show me?

He gestures to the rims of craters, the jagged pinnacles of mountains, the Earth floating in the lunar sky.

DR. MANHATTAN

The stillness. The beauty. The utter insignificance of man.

CUT TO:

INT. OWLSHIP - DUSK

Rorschach chafes impatiently as Dreiberger leans against a wall, despondent.

RORSCHACH

No use wallowing in self-pity.
Work to do.

Dreiberger turns on him in a fury.

DREIBERG

Who the fuck do you think you are?! The whole world agrees you're a goddamn psycho; but no, you're my friend; so I stick by you. And what do I get? Insults! You don't like me? Go be alone, you goddamn sick fuck!

Rorschach stiffens in a most peculiar manner. Dreiberger prepares for some kind of reprisal. They stand there like that for a long beat.

RORSCHACH

You are a good friend. I know that.

Dreiberger can't believe what he's hearing.

RORSCHACH

Forgive me.

Rorschach offers his hand. Dreiberger accepts it. They reconcile with a firm shake and a pat on the shoulder. Dreiberger wipes a tear from under his goggles.

RORSCHACH

I'm sorry Miss Juspeczyk had to leave.

Dreiberger nods and composes himself; but the anger and disappointment over Laurie are still boiling underneath.

DREIBERG

No use waiting down here.

Dreiberger throws a switch at the controls, and bubbles course in front of the windshields. They're rising to the surface.

DREIBERG

Let's cause some pain.

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR - DUSK

The Owlship breaks through the dark waves and hovers for a moment before flying toward the city.

CUT TO:

INT. HAPPY HARRY'S BAR - NIGHT

The joint is busy, as usual. Happy Harry is tending bar in a jolly mood. A cold wind blows, and Harry glances toward the door. He stops being happy.

HAPPY HARRY

Oh no. Oh no.

RORSCHACH

Oh yes,

If Rorschach's mask could smile, this is what it would look like. Dreiberger stands beside him, and he seems as mirthless as Rorschach used to be.

RORSCHACH

Missed you while in prison,
friends. -- Looking for Jack of
Hearts.

Rorschach slaps a folded newspaper against his gloved hand as he stares at the criminals. The crowd parts, leaving Jack exposed. He sits at the bar, melancholy and alone, drowning his sorrows in drink. He holds out his bandaged hand to Rorschach.

JACK OF HEARTS
What do you want to know?

Rorschach accepts Jack's bandaged hand and shoves a newspaper in his face -- the newspaper with the photo of Harley shooting at Veidt.

RORSCHACH
Who hired your boyfriend?

JACK OF HEARTS
Moloch. Said he had an easy hit, not much money. So I figured Harley could handle it. I put him in touch.

RORSCHACH
With Moloch? Just Moloch?

JACK OF HEARTS
Yeah, just Moloch, that asshole. Got my friend killed.

Dreiberg grabs Jack's hand and crunches it mercilessly.

DREIBERG
Your friend? You tried to kill my friend!

JACK OF HEARTS
Ya think I knew that? You think I'd a sent my pal up against Veidt?

Dreiberg grabs him by the throat and squeezes.

DREIBERG
That makes it okay? Cause you didn't know who you were killing? -- I oughta break your neck, you stinking cockroach!

Dreiberg cuts off his breath. Rorschach whispers to him.

RORSCHACH
We have the knowledge we wanted.

DREIBERG
You know how much firepower I have floating out there? I could take out this entire rat-hole neighborhood.

Dreiberg is strangling Jack to death. Rorschach grips his forearm firmly.

RORSCHACH
Not in front of civilians.

Gradually, Dreiberger regains his senses and lets go of Jack's neck. He looks at Rorschach, then at the criminals in the bar, who stare at him in terror. Dreiberger is shaken by his rage, his loss of control.

DREIBERG
I'm okay, I'm okay.

He walks to the door: The criminals fearfully move out of his path. Rorschach turns to the criminal fraternity.

RORSCHACH
Now they're two of us.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MOON - SAME TIME

Dr. Manhattan takes Laurie on a walk through some picturesque spots.

DR. MANHATTAN
I can't tell you how much happier I've been since I left Earth.
I think the planet might really be better off without human beings.

LAURIE
Cut the Mt. Olympus crap, okay, Jon. Sure they're some lousy people in the world. But that doesn't mean you wash your hands of the whole human race.

JON
You're the only human I care about, Laurie. And you don't love me any more.

The fate of the world may be riding on this one, and Laurie knows it.

LAURIE
I...I do love you, Jon. I've just been so lonely. Cooped up in that lab, no work of my own.

JON
Is that why you're sleeping with Dreiberger?

Laurie feels ashamed and afraid -- and defeated.

LAURIE
My place is with you, Jon. I realize that now. I'm sorry I left; I was wrong.
(more)

LAURIE (Cont'd)
(takes his arm)
Let's go back; we'll work things
out. Maybe a therapist can help
us.

Dr. Manhattan curls an arm around her, pleased and
forgiving.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOCKS - NIGHT

The Owlship floats in the water by a pier, hidden in the
thick fog. Dreiberg and Rorschach climb down a rope ladder
to the top of the vessel.

DREIBERG
It doesn't make sense. If you
want to kill Adrian Veidt, you
don't hire a beginner.

RORSCHACH
Unless you want assassination to
fail.

DREIBERG
Who would want that?

Rorschach opens the hatch.

RORSCHACH
The victim.

Dreiberg pauses, stunned, as Rorschach climbs down into
the Owlship.

INT. OWLSHIP - NIGHT

Dreiberg climbs down the ladder a few paces behind
Rorschach.

DREIBERG
You think Adrian arranged his own
assassination to throw us off the
track?

RORSCHACH
Clear now. Veidt behind
everything. Got Brain Trust out
of jail. Working together for
years.

Dreiberg has a dreadful revelation.

DREIBERG
Then that's why he hightailed it
down to Karnak.

Dreiberg steps to the controls and starts up the engines.

DREIBERG
Whatever they've been planning...
(engine growls)
It's about to happen.

ROAR! Dreiberg jams the throttle forward.

EXT. OWLSHIP - NIGHT

Rocket exhaust lights up the fog, and the Owlship rises straight up.

CUT TO:

INT. KARNAK / INFORMATION ROOM - NIGHT

Veidt sits in front of the bank of TV monitors watching news reports from around the world. The situation is getting worse. Armies crossing borders. More missiles falling, now on cities. U.S. satellite reconnaissance reports that nuclear missiles are being prepared for launch in India, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Israel, and North Korea. Given the rising tensions, The United States, Russia, China, France, and Great Britain have also gone on nuclear alert.

Veidt's attention, however, is drawn to the silent progress of a large satellite. It has the words, VEIDT INDUSTRIES, painted on it. Another large Veidt Industries satellite floats into frame and approaches the first.

Veidt presses a control on his armrest.

EXTENDER ARMS project from both satellites as they prepare to link up.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MOON - SAME TIME

Laurie, wrapped in Dr. Manhattan's embrace, glances anxiously up at the Earth.

LAURIE
We should be getting back, don't you think?

JON
It's not going to work out,
Laurie. I'm not capable of love
anymore. It's something I
outgrew.

(sad smile)
Unfortunately, I haven't outgrown
the need for love.

LAURIE
Billions of people love you.

JON
No they don't. They want me to protect them. They think I'm a big blue genie to grant their wishes. But why should I?

Up on Earth, a little ring of white smoke pushes through the atmosphere. Laurie, alarmed, interrupts...

LAURIE
What's that?

JON
(matter of fact)
A fission explosion. Somewhere over Bombay.

Laurie is speechless.

DR. MANHATTAN
See what I mean? Why bother?

CUT TO:

INT. KARNAK / INFORMATION ROOM

Veidt sits before his video wall, sipping mulled wine from a goblet. The video screen from Bombay goes to NOISY STATIC.

Veidt reacts as if he knows what that means.

He tunes into CNN NEWS. The Newscaster interrupts himself.

NEWSCASTER
This just in. For the first time since the end of World War II, an atomic weapon has been exploded in warfare. At 10:47 PM Eastern Standard Time, a nuclear device was dropped on Bombay, India. Casualties are not yet known, but the blast exceeded 5 megatons, making it fifty times more powerful than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

Veidt seems pained, but not surprised, like watching a sad movie that you've seen before. He shifts his gaze to the video screen which shows his satellites in space, which now complete their coupling.

A LIGHT on his armrest flashes, "READY."

Veidt sits back in his chair and scans the entire Video Wall, taking in an overview of the world.

CUT TO:

AERIAL SHOT - OWLSHIP - NIGHT

The Owlship cruises through a BLIZZARD over the coast of Antarctica

INT. OWLSHIP - NIGHT

Rorschach stands impatiently behind the driver's seat as Dreiberger pilots the vessel. The engine is making funny noises.

RORSCHACH

How much longer? We've been over Antarctica for hours.

DREIBERG

Can't be far. It's along the coastline.

The engine loses power just as they approach some cliffs.

DREIBERG

Shit.

RORSCHACH

Daniel, coming in too low.

DREIBERG

I know

RORSCHACH

Don't wish to interfere, but should perhaps pull up sharply before...

DREIBERG

I'm trying, goddammit!

It looks like certain death, but at the last minute, the Owlship gets a brief surge of power and skims over the ridgeline.

Karnak comes into view like the Emerald City.

DREIBERG

I'm taking her down.

(throwing switches)

Strap in.

The ship rocks with the force of a premature impact.

EXT. KARNAK - NIGHT

The Owlship takes a hard bounce against the snow and skids to a stop.

INT. KARNAK / INFORMATION ROOM - NIGHT

Veidt presses a button. The table opens, and a steaming hot vegetarian meal presents itself, complete with elegant place setting and exotic serving dishes. He flips a switch, and the audio for the Video Wall is replaced by Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Second Movement.

While Veidt enjoys his meal, he neglects to observe the Owlship on the video monitors showing the exterior of Karnak.

The hatch of the Owlship opens. Rorschach and Dreiberger climb out.

EXT. KARNAK - NIGHT

Woefully underdressed, Dreiberger and Rorschach turn up their collars and slog toward the palace, which looms above them like a monument from antiquity.

DREIBERG

Look at this place. Adrian's amazing.

RORSCHACH

Can't imagine more dangerous enemy.

INT. KARNAK / INFORMATION ROOM - NIGHT

As Adrian eats, the screens for Beijing, Seoul, and Tel Aviv go to static. He takes note and returns to his meal.

EXT. KARNAK - NIGHT

Dreiberger and Rorschach, half-frozen and covered with frost, approach a TUBULAR VENTILLATION DUCT with a metal grating.

DREIBERG

I think I can burn out the hinge.

Dreiberger's frozen hands fumble with his belt, extracting a portable welding device.

RORSCHACH

Must be insane.

DREIBERG

Who, us?

RORSCHACH

Veidt. To start a war.

Hwmp. The little blow torch ignites.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOON - NIGHT

Dr. Manhattan and Laurie are looking up at the Earth, where additional nuclear explosions are bursting through the atmosphere. Laurie watches in despair. Doc might as well be identifying pushpins on a globe.

DR. MANHATTAN
Let's see, that's Calcutta there.
And I believe that's Baghdad.

LAURIE
Jon, stop it! You talk like you're not human.

DR. MANHATTAN
I was, Laurie. Then I became something else.

LAURIE
(impassioned)
What you became is still human.
You're the proof that human beings can evolve. That we won't always be fighting wars.

The embers of his humanity glow ever so faintly.

LAURIE
But we need time, Jon. We need your help.

Dr. Manhattan gazes up at the Earth, painfully torn. Finally, he comes to a decision.

DR. MANHATTAN
I can't save humanity. Humanity has to save itself. -- They know how.

Laurie starts to cry. He reaches out to comfort her, and she shrugs him off.

LAURIE
Take me home.

CUT TO:

EXT. TUBULAR ENTRANCE / KARNAK - NIGHT

The grating has been welded open and bent aside.

INT. MAIN HALL / KARNAK - NIGHT

Dreiberg and Rorschach brush snow from their clothes as they enter the monumental foyer. They proceed through the palace, overawed by its grandeur -- whispering.

DREIBERG

How do we approach him? What do we say?

RORSCHACH

Subdue him first. Ask questions later.

DREIBERG

It's going to feel strange. Adrian's a pacifist, a vegetarian.

RORSCHACH

Hitler was vegetarian. Suggest we proceed quietly from here.

They skulk along a row of soaring columns, following the sound of the MUSIC.

INT. KARNAK / INFORMATION ROOM - NIGHT

They arrive and see Veidt from behind, eating dinner in front of the Video Wall. The music is playing very loud.

Rorschach and Dreiberг creep up behind him.

Veidt picks up his fork and eats a mouthful of peas.

Rorschach lunges for Veidt's throat.

With unbelievable quickness, Veidt grabs Rorschach's right arm, pulls down, and stabs his fork through Rorschach's coat sleeve, pinning him to the table. Veidt pivots, smashing the back of his fist across Rorschach's face.

DREIBERG

Adrian, don't make me...

Dreiberg, standing behind Veidt, aims a small dart gun. Veidt grabs a round brass platter and flings it like a discuss. Before Dreiberг can finish his threat, the metal lid smashes into his face, dropping him to his knees. Dreiberг struggles to stand with blood dripping profusely from his nose.

Rorschach pulls the fork from the table and lunges for Veidt, who blocks the attack with a silver tray. Veidt twists Rorschach's mask to the side, blinding him. As Rorschach struggles to straighten his face, Veidt pummels him to the floor.

Dreiberger pulls a LIGHT BLASTER from his belt. When he looks up, Bubastis, the jungle cat, sprints toward him, teeth bared. Dreiberger takes aim. The cat springs. Dreiberger fires blinding flashes of light. The cat knocks Dreiberger over and goes for his throat.

Veidt claps his hands twice, and Bubastis relents at the last second.

VEIDT
Down girl.

Veidt grabs a futuristic GUN which has been lying on the table all along -- part of the place setting -- and advances on his old colleagues.

VEIDT
I'm sorry you got involved in
this, Daniel.

DREIBERG
(standing)
Adrian, you killed the Comedian.

VEIDT
I had no choice. He threatened
my plan.

FLASHCUT OF VEIDT HEAVING THE BLOODED COMEDIAN THROUGH THE PLATE GLASS WINDOW OF HIS APARTMENT.

DREIBERG
What plan is that important?

Veidt pauses a moment, deciding whether to explain.

VEIDT
Remember our last meeting as the
Watchmen?

FLASHCUT OF THE WATCHMEN'S CLUBHOUSE AS THE COMEDIAN SETS FIRE TO VEIDT'S MAP OF THE WORLD.

VEIDT
The Comedian was entirely correct. While we traipsed around in our costumes, humanity was racing toward destruction. And nobody was doing a damn thing about it. - - At that moment, I realized the survival of mankind was entirely up to me. If I didn't personally bring an end to war and bloodshed, the human race would perish.

Veidt stares at a tapestry of Alexander the Great cutting the Gordian Knot.

VEIDT

Like Alexander, I cut through the problem with a radical solution. But I knew Dr. Manhattan would never let me get away with it. Therefore, he had to be removed.

RORSCHACH

How?

FLASHCUT OF DR. MANHATTAN WORKING IN HIS LAB AS LAURIE READS IN BED, BORED.

VEIDT

I knew all it would take was a little push. Jon's been ready to blow for years. So I, uh, arranged for Laurie to leave him.
(to Dreiberger)
I suggested she call you.

DREIBERG

Then, like good little puppets, we obeyed and fell in love.

VEIDT

When you understand the forces at work, Daniel, they're easy to control.

FLASHCUT OF DREIBERG RECEIVING LAURIE'S CALL INVITING HIM TO DINNER. HE IS THRILLED LIKE A SCHOOLBOY.

VEIDT

I allayed your suspicions of me by staging my own assassination. And I covered it up by feeding the hit man a cyanide pill.

FLASHCUT OF VEIDT FORCING A CYANIDE PILL INTO HARLEY'S MOUTH AS THEY STRUGGLE IN THE REFLECTING POOL.

VEIDT

Poor Moloch desperately needed money for some last ditch cancer treatment. So I knew he'd do anything.

FLASHCUTS OF MOLOCH COUGHING AS HE MEETS WITH THE COMEDIAN, WITH RORSCHACH, AND WITH JACK OF HEARTS.

VEIDT

Unfortunately, he had to die a few months early.

FLASHCUT OF VEIDT SHOOTING MOLOCH IN THE FOREHEAD.

RORSCHACH
What about Brain Trust?

VEIDT
I got them out of prison one at a time.

FLASHCUT OF DR. CORTEX BEING SPIRITED FROM THE PRISON INFIRMARY IN A BODY BAG.

VEIDT
Being intelligent, they agreed with my plan and agreed to help. I started my rocket launching business as the first step.

FLASHCUT OF THE FIVE MEMBERS OF THE BRAIN TRUST AT A ROCKET LAUNCH WITH VEIDT.

RORSCHACH
Where are they now?

VEIDT
Dead. Casualties of that terrible explosion I set off at my facility.

FLASHCUT OF THE FIVE MEMBERS OF THE BRAIN TRUST ENGULFED IN FIRE AS THE ROCKET LAUNCHING FACILITY EXPLODES.

VEIDT
No one will ever know the heroic work they did to bring peace to the world. Much greater than anything we accomplished as Watchmen.

DREIBERG
So what's this brilliant plan? I'm dying of suspense.

VEIDT
It's simple really.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

PEOPLE ARE GOING ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS ON A CROWDED CORNER. A RED FLARE, LIKE A COMET, APPEARS IN THE DARK SKY.
PEDESTRIANS START TO NOTICE IT. THEY POINT IT OUT TO EACH OTHER. THEY STAND ABOUT IN GROUPS AND WATCH IT.

VEIDT (V.O.)
To force governments into cooperation, I would convince them that all mankind faced a common threat. -- I would do this by staging the crash of an alien spaceship in downtown Manhattan.

BACK TO SCENE

Dreiberg and Rorschach don't know what to think about this totally wild story.

DREIBERG
Adrian, you need help. Crashing a fake spaceship in New York...?

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

THE FLARE GROWS LARGER AND BRIGHTER AS IT APPROACHES. PEOPLE ARE BECOMING FRIGHTENED.

VEIDT (V.O.)
Give me credit for some intelligence, Daniel. I'm not going to crash a whole spaceship. -- I'm going to crash selected fragments.

THE FLARE NOW APPROACHES WITH A DEAFENING SHRIEK. IT IS CLEARLY A BURNING SPACESHIP, SPINNING, TUMBLING OUT OF CONTROL. COMING RIGHT AT US. IT'S GOING TO CRASH RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF MANHATTAN. PEOPLE PANIC AND FLEE IN ALL DIRECTIONS.

VEIDT (V.O.) -
Experts will then examine the debris and draw their own conclusions.

THE SPACESHIP CRASHES INTO SKYSCRAPERS AND EXPLODES IN A GIANT FIREBALL THAT CONSUMES SEVERAL BLOCKS.

BACK TO SCENE

Dreiberg seems more disturbed than afraid.

DREIBERG
You seriously planned all this mad scientist stuff? When was it supposed to happen?

VEIDT
Daniel, do you really think I'd have said a word if there remained the slightest chance of your affecting its outcome? -- It happened thirty-five minutes ago.

Dreiberg and Rorschach look at each other with a sinking feeling. Veidt smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

The aftermath of the crash we saw. Clouds of smoke, dust, and fire. A zone of destruction around the site of impact. Burned out buildings. Streets lined with broken windows. Cars crashed into fire hydrants spewing water. Trucks crashed into buildings with radios still blaring. Dead bodies. A pile of rubble mashing a gang of topknots. Fragments of a huge spaceship. Giant tentacles of an ALIEN CREATURE. Alien skin and flesh and carapace.

Other angles. Each one showing more of the spaceship, its warlike design. Objects that seem like weapons. Pieces of the monster.

People stirring. Newspapers blowing in the wind. Headlines screaming of war and nuclear explosions.

A BLUE GLOW. Dr. Manhattan and Laurie step out of the space warp into the devastation. She looks around, stupefied, trying to make sense of the cataclysm. Dr. Manhattan studies the phenomenon, intrigued.

LAURIE
Oh my god...Looks like...Can't
be....Not a...?

Dr. Manhattan picks up a disgusting glop of alien protoplasm and rubs it between his fingers. Puzzlement gives way to some semblance of certainty.

LAURIE
Do you understand what's
happened?

DR. MANHATTAN
History is flowing in a new
direction. It's really quite
fascinating.

LAURIE
So you'll stay?

DR. MANHATTAN
No. But if you want, I'll take
you with me. -- Don't you want
to see the universe?

Laurie isn't even tempted. She stops faking.

LAURIE
I want to be with Daniel.

Dr. Manhattan seems very sad.

CUT TO:

INT. KARNAK / INFORMATION ROOM - NIGHT

Dreiberg, Rorschach, and Veidt are where we left them.
Daniel grins uncertainly.

DREIBERG
Adrian, I don't buy it. What are you really up to?

RORSCHACH
He's telling truth. Listen to voice.

The horror finally occurs to Dreiberger.

DREIBERG
How many people died?

VEIDT
What does it matter? Think of the millions who won't die in wars.

DREIBERG
What if you're wrong?

VEIDT
I'm not.

DREIBERG
What if you're wrong!!!!

VEIDT
Christ, Daniel! I'm doing what I have to to save the godforsaken human race!

Veidt calms himself. His demeanor becomes stiff.

VEIDT
Unfortunately, if word got out this was a hoax, the entire benefit would be lost.

Something in Veidt's eyes makes Dreiberger nervous.

DREIBERG
What are you saying?

Veidt aims his gun at Dreiberger.

VEIDT
I'm sorry, Daniel. I can't take the chance.

DREIBERG
Come on, Adrian, I'll keep my
mouth shut. I'm just starting
to feel good about things again.

As Veidt prepares to shoot, a BLUE AUREOLE OF LIGHT appears in the room, distracting him. Laurie steps out of the warp.

Rorschach lunges at Veidt.

Veidt spins and SHOOTS Rorschach near the shoulder. Dreiberger and Laurie charge, but Veidt pivots and keeps them covered.

VEIDT
Bad timing, Laurie. This is one
part of my plan that I'll truly
regret.

Without pause, he aims the gun at her point blank and pulls the trigger. Before a gunshot sounds, the gun dematerializes into a BLUE GLOW.

VEIDT
Oh shit!

Dr. Manhattan, forty feet tall, steps through a wall into Karnak.

DR. MANHATTAN
Veidt.

While Veidt looks up, Rorschach lunges at him and wrenches his head with his good arm -- SNAPPING HIS NECK.

The other Watchmen are shocked by this sudden turn of events. Rorschach releases Veidt's body, which drops to the floor.

Dr. Manhattan shrinks down to lifesize.

LAURIE
You changed your mind.

DR. MANHATTAN
I made one last exception.

Dreiberger goes over to Rorschach, to tend to him.

DREIBERG
How bad are you hurt?

RORSCHACH
Never mind.

Rorschach shies away, refusing to let Dreiberger touch him. They join Doc and Laurie by Veidt's corpse.

LAURIE

I can't believe he thought this crazy plan would work.

DR. MANHATTAN

It's quite rational, actually.

Rorschach, holding his injured shoulder, steps to the video console and turns on the AUDIO of the VIDEO WALL. News floods in from many sources.

VARIOUS SCREENS

Scientists are confirming rumors that the explosion in Manhattan was, in fact, the crash of an alien spaceship. -- Secretary General of the United Nations has called for an emergency session to discuss a unified response to this evening's event. -- India and China have agreed to an immediate cease fire. -- Israel and the Arab nations have agreed to interrupt hostilities. -- North and South Korea have agreed to a cease fire in place until the news from New York can be confirmed.

--

The Watchmen watch in awe as Veidt's prophecies come true.

LAURIE

I don't believe it.

DREIBERG

He did it. It worked.

DR. MANHATTAN

I'm very impressed.

They gaze somewhat regretfully at Veidt's body on the floor - - then glance at Rorschach with mixed feelings.

LAURIE

What does it mean? We can't tell anybody?

DREIBERG

People have a right to know. We shouldn't be playing god.

LAURIE

Jon, what do we do?

She looks around for Dr. Manhattan.

LAURIE
Jon...?

Everyone looks, but Dr. Manhattan is nowhere to be seen. On the floor, where he stood, is a small crystal GLOBE OF THE EARTH AS SEEN FROM SPACE, just big enough to fill your hands. Laurie picks it up and holds it awkwardly, as if she's afraid she'll break it. She shows it to the others.

LAURIE
He's gone.

DREIBERG
It's up to us.

Dreiberger, Laurie, and Rorschach look at each other, not really wanting this responsibility. They turn to the Video Wall.

Hard news has given way to personal reactions to the event. Broadcasts from all over the world are echoing the same message of unity and brotherhood. People express a sense of being salvation and revelation. Our petty differences seem insignificant. Although there is some fear, everyone seems optimistic, energized, transformed. Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" expresses the appropriate feeling.

DREIBERG
I guess that settles it. We better keep quiet and gives this thing a chance.

LAURIE
We don't really have much choice, do we? What's done is done.

DREIBERG
What do you think, Rorschach?

RORSCHACH
Must be joking.

Rorschach starts walking out of the hall.

DREIBERG
Rorschach...?

Dreiberger looks at Laurie, then they run after Rorschach.

INT. KARNAK / OTHER ROOMS - NIGHT

Rorschach treads in his unhurried way toward the tubular exit, his gait uneven because of his wound. Laurie and Dreiberger catch up with him.

DREIBERG
Where are you going?

RORSCHACH
(without turning)
New York.

LAURIE
What are you going to do?

RORSCHACH
Tell the truth.

Rorschach keeps walking, looking straight ahead.

DREIBERG
Let's think this through
Rorschach. We've got an amazing
opportunity here.

LAURIE
We're talking about peace.
Don't you think we ought to give
it a try?

DREIBERG
If you tell the truth, war will
just break out all over again.
Innocent people will die.

RORSCHACH
Innocent people died.

Rorschach opens the door and enters the Tubular Walkway.

INT. TUBULAR WALKWAY - NIGHT

Rorschach weakly continues his trek, Dreiberger and Laurie
following along.

DREIBERG
Rorschach, you're in no
condition to travel.

LAURIE
Look, you can always tell the
truth later. What have you got
to lose by playing along for a
while?

DREIBERG
Do you always have to be such a
hard-ass? -- Can't we compromise
on this?

Rorschach turns to face them.

RORSCHACH
No. Never compromise. Never.

He opens the door and steps into the frigid white wasteland. It is snowing heavily.

Dreiberg stands there and watches Rorschach slog painfully through the snow. Dreiberg opens a compartment of his belt and pulls out A GUN.

EXT. KARNAK - NIGHT

Dreiberg runs after Rorschach.

DREIBERG
Rorschach!

Rorschach stumbles but keeps going. Dreiberg stops and aims his gun.

DREIBERG
Stop right there.

Rorschach approaches the Owlship. Dreiberg is in agony as he prepares to pull the trigger. Laurie stands beside him.

DREIBERG
PLEASE!

Rorschach opens the hatch of the Owlship.

Dreiberg struggles to summon the strength to pull the trigger on his old friend. He squints, trembles...

Rorschach falls forward in the snow.

Dreiberg is suspicious. He glances at Laurie. Lowers the unfired gun.

Hesitantly, they approach Rorschach. Dreiberg gives the gun to Laurie. Nervously, he kneels down by Rorschach, half-expecting the maniac to spin around and kill him.

He touches Rorschach's body. It's limp. He rolls him over.

The snow is red with blood. He opens Rorschach's overcoat. His shirt is soaked crimson.

Daniel and Laurie hold each other as the snow falls heavily around them.

CAMERA zooms in on Rorschach's face -- an indecipherable pattern.

DISSOLVE TO:

FALLING SNOW

in a gray sky. CAMERA PANS DOWN TO...

EXT. VEIDT TOWER - DAY

The giant letters on top. Pans down to the giant billboard for Adrian's new fragrance, MILLENIUM -- "by Veidt." It features a HEROIC YOUNG COUPLE gazing toward a bright future.

A ringing BELL.

EXT. THE CRASH SITE - DAY

A Salvation Army SANTA CLAUS rings a handbell and collects donations from PASSERS-BY, who are surprisingly cheerful and generous.

SANTA CLAUS
End hunger now.

CAMERA PANS and reveals that Santa stands at the edge of the CRASH SITE, a large flattened area full of rubble.

Other VENDORS hawk UNITED NATIONS T-SHIRTS and BASEBALL CAPS featuring doves and olive branches. Other T-shirts and Banners proclaim, "One World," / "We're all in this together" / "ALIENS GO HOME."

At a NEWS STAND, newspapers proclaim, U.N. VOTES TO OUTLAW WAR. Smaller headlines announce: CTU DISBANDED, BULLARD INDICTED.

EXT. HOLLIS MASON'S APARTMENT - DAY

Hollis unloads boxes from a U-HAUL VAN parked in front of his building. He carries them inside. A NEIGHBOR passes him in the hallway.

NEIGHBOR
You goin' to the U.N., Hollis?
There's gonna be fireworks.

HOLLIS
Maybe later, Joe.

Hollis continues into his apartment.

INT. HOLLIS MASON'S APARTMENT - DAY

The apartment is filled with boxes and additional furniture. Someone is moving in. Hollis detours around the Christmas tree.

HOLLIS
Where do you want these?

Sally Jupiter holds the large framed pin-up of herself in her prime.

SALLY
Just set 'em down and help me
with this.

He puts the boxes on a table.

HOLLIS
You're not hanging that up, are
you?

SALLY
You've got your old junk all
over the place.

HOLLIS
Yeah, but my junk isn't obscene.

SALLY
Honey, this is artistic. What
we did last night is obscene.

A KNOCK at the door. They turn to see a BLOND COUPLE holding
a bouquet of flowers.

HOLLIS
Can I help you?

The Blond Couple just stands there, waiting for something.
Hollis and Sally look at them strangely, look at each other.
Sally has an idea, starts to smile...

SALLY
Laurie?

BLONDE WOMAN/LAURIE
Mom...

They run into each other's arms and hug and cry.

HOLLIS
Danny, that can't be you.

The men embrace heartily.

SALLY
Oh baby, I was so worried about
you.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLLIS MASON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Daniel, Laurie, Hollis, and Sally sit around the dinner table
after a festive meal -- like one big happy family.

DREIBERG

-We'd have called sooner, but things were pretty hectic with peace breaking out all over.

HOLLIS

It's funny. Two thousand years ago, this guy comes down and tells us everything we need to know about peace, but nobody pays any attention till a flying saucer lands in their backyard.

LAURIE

Maybe we weren't ready til now.

SALLY

It's all so friggin' weird I keep expecting The Comedian to pop up and tell us the whole thing's a big joke.

She laughs at her own joke, but Daniel and Laurie glance at each other apprehensively.

SALLY

Did I say something?

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Dreiberg, dressed in his Night Owl costume, gazes pensively at The Comedian's Happy Face Button which he holds in his gloved hand. Laurie shivers as she finishes putting on her Silk Spectre costume.

LAURIE

I absolutely have to have a new costume, Daniel. Something warmer, with a little more support.

She turns and sees that Daniel is feeling glum.

LAURIE

What's the matter, honey?

DREIBERG

Just thinking 'bout what your mother said.

Laurie comes over and straightens his cowl and wings.

LAURIE
Sweetheart, you know eventually
the truth is gonna come out.
It's got to. -- Zip me up, will
you?

Laurie turns her back and lifts her hair. Dreiberger sets down
the Happy Face Button and zips up her costume

DREIBERG
I know. Let's just hope it
won't matter by then.

She smiles at him and adjusts her hair.

LAURIE
How do I look?

He puts on his goggles.

OWLVISION

We see her body glowing red against the cool blue background.

DREIBERG
Hot. Very hot.

BACK TO SCENE

They look over the edge of the rooftop at the streets below.
Laurie points.

LAURIE
What's that there, a mugging?

DREIBERG
A couple of kids making out.

They look around some more.

DREIBERG
And honey, let's make it an
early night, okay? Yesterday I
fell asleep at my job.

LAURIE
Some Night Owl.

DREIBERG
Hey, I've got better things to
do in the dark.

He pinches her behind. She slaps his hand playfully.

LAURIE
Not till you've earned it.

Dreiberger reluctantly looks back at the city.

DREIBERG

Okay, there, two blocks down. A gang of topknots are knocking over Mr. Kim's liquor store. Let's wrap this up quick.

A little nervous, Daniel and Laurie straighten their costumes and tighten their belts. Daniel sets down the Happy Face Button and pulls his TALON GUN from his belt. He fires it at a MILLENIUM BILLBOARD across the street.

The Talon hooks onto the top of the Billboard. Dreibergr wraps his arm around Laurie.

DREIBERG

Ready?

She nods. He holds her tight.

DREIBERG

Okay, here goes.

They leap off the roof and sail along the wire OUT OF FRAME. CAMERA is left staring at the MILLENIUM billboard across the way. Then CAMERA PANS down to the HAPPY FACE BUTTON on the brick ledge of the rooftop.

ZOOM IN on HAPPY FACE BUTTON.

THE END